

THE BIRTH OF THE PROPHET

Background, Significance, Preparations, Events and Miracles



JUSTICE SHAYKH MUHAMMAD KARAM SHAH AL-AZHARI

Compiled and Translated by
MUHAMMAD SAJID YOUNUS



*Allah verily hath shown grace to the believers by sending unto them
a messenger of their own who reciteth unto them His revelations, and
causeth them to grow, and teacheth them the Scripture and wisdom;
although before (he came to them) they were in flagrant error*

(3:164)

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INTRODUCTION THE NEW DAWN



On a Monday in the month of *Rabi' al-Awwal*, during the pleasant break of dawn, when the darkness of the night was disappearing and the brightness of the new day spreading, the light of perpetual happiness and eternal good fortune shone in the humble but grief stricken abode of Sayyiduna 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's young widowed daughter in law.

This was the birth of he whose heart endearing face brought true happiness not only to his grieving mother but spread joy across the faces of all the grief stricken. The appearance of his enlightened visage illuminated not just the depressed house of Sayyiduna 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib but spread hope and inspired broken hearts where ever despair and bad fortune had sunk it's evil claws.

It was not just the dormant fortune of Arabia that awoke but the whole of humanity, bound in the shackles of greed and squeezed through the mangle of tyranny and oppression, was reborn and emancipated from all forms of psychological, economic and political slavery.

The people of Makka and Hijāz, who had long forgotten their Lord, were not the only ones to become acquainted with both themselves and their Lord but the doors to the tavern of *ma'rifa* (recognition) were thrown open to both the Arab and 'Ajam (non

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Arabs) and the whole of humanity was invited to come and drink as much of this pure liquor as they could raise to their lips!

The sweet voiced birds began to sing the arrival of the one who was to bring an eternal spring to the garden of humanity savaged by the decaying forces of Autumn. The floundering buds were not just pleased but overjoyed in the arrival of the one who would awaken and transform them into flourishing flowers. The sad buds smiled on the arrival of the one who would blossom them into an eternal garden by giving them colour and fragrance, whilst in the ocean of knowledge the sparkling pearls lying hidden for centuries in the warm womb of their shells became restless in the desire to be discovered!

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By the time Sayyida Āmina had graced the blessed house of her elderly father in law, Sayyiduna ‘Abd al-Muttalib, the light (*nūr*) of the Prophet ﷺ had already transferred from the honourable forehead of Sayyiduna ‘Abdullāh to settle in her pure womb. Even at this early stage the unique qualities of this light (*nūr*) were evident.

Sayyida Āmina reveals: “I did not realise I was pregnant. Nor did I feel the burden other women in this state feel. All I knew was that my monthly cycle had stopped. (One day) I was between sleep and alert when someone came to me and said “Do you realise you are pregnant?” I replied “I don’t know”. He said: “Verily you are carrying the Chief and Prophet of this community (*umma*)”.” This incident took place on a Monday!

Sayyida Āmina states that her days of expectancy passed very comfortably and when her term was complete the same angel, which had previously given her the good news, came and said: “Say I seek Allāh’s, the One, refuge for it from the evil of all the envious”.

The joyous event of the Prophet’s ﷺ birth took place on Monday the 12th of *Rabi’ al-Awwal*. Some have stated that it was the 2nd of *Rabi’ al-Awwal* whilst others said it was the 10th of *Rabi’ al-Awwal*. Sayyida Āmina describes that on the blessed night of the Prophet’s ﷺ birth she saw a light (*nūr*) whose brightness lit up the palaces of Syria such that she was able to see them. Another narration

mentions that when the birth of the Prophet ﷺ took place a light (*mīr*) from Sayyida Āmina caused the whole house to shine and the light was seen everywhere.

The mother of 'Abd al-Rahmān bin 'Awf al-Shifā, in whose destiny was the good fortune of becoming the Prophet's ﷺ foster mother, tells that when the Prophet ﷺ was born she held him in her two arms and heard a voice say: "May your lord have mercy upon you."

al-Shifā states: "With his appearance a light spread before me to both the East and the West and I was able to see the palaces of Syria." al-Shifā tells that when she lay down darkness ensued and she was overcome by fear and tremble, then a light shone to her right and she heard a voice ask: "To where did you take this child?" (Another voice) answered: "I took him towards the West."

Darkness again ensued and she started to shiver and tremble. A light shone to her left side and she heard a voice ask: "To where did you take this child?"

The second voice answered: "I took him towards the East. I will not take him again" as-Shifā states: "This incident occupied my heart until Allāh revealed his Prophet ﷺ and I was amongst the first to believe in him ﷺ."

Sayyida Āmina states that when the Prophet ﷺ was born he sat up on his knees on the ground looking towards the sky. The umbilical cord was already cut. Wāhib bin Zamā's Paternal Aunt states that when the Prophet ﷺ was born Sayyida Āmina sent a messenger to tell Sayyiduna 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib the good news, who was sitting in the *haimir* (in the Ka'ba) amongst his sons and fellow clansmen. There was no end to Sayyiduna 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's joy and happiness. Sayyiduna 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib came to Sayyida Āmina who told him of the light and splendour of the birth and the voices she had heard.

'Abd al-Muṭṭalib took the Prophet ﷺ to the Ka'ba, stood there and made supplication (*du'ā*) to Allāh and thanked Him for this reward. Ibn Wāqid states that the following words flowed from Sayyiduna 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's lips:

"All Praise to Allāh who has blessed me with this pure sleeved child, he is, in his cradle, chief of all children, I place him under

the sanctuary of the House of God. Until I see him strong and powerful I put him in this House's protection from the evil of all enemies, enviers and those who cast their evil eye"

Sayyiduna 'Abbās states that when the Prophet ﷺ was born he was already circumcised with his umbilical cord cut. Realising this the Prophet's ﷺ grandfather was most astonished and proclaimed: "My child will be great and glorious."

The poet of the Prophet's ﷺ court, Sayyiduna Ḥassān bin Thābit, was blessed by Allāh with longevity. Sixty of his years passed in the years of ignorance (*jāhiliyya*) and he was given another sixty years as a true believer. He states: "My age was seven or eight and I had enough sense to remember everything I saw and heard. One morning I saw a Jew on top of a high hilllock in *Yathrib*¹ calling out: "O Jewish people, gather around me!" They all ran towards him and asked what was the matter. He told them: "The star, which was to rise in the night of Ahmad's birth, has risen!"

Ka'b al-Ahbār states: "I have seen in the Torah that Allāh had informed Sayyiduna Mūsa ؑ of the time of the birth of Muḥammad ﷺ, and Sayyiduna Mūsa ؑ had in turn told his nation the sign that the star they knew by such a name would move from its place on the night of the Prophet's ﷺ birth. This fact was so well known amongst the Children of Israel that the scholars would tell each other about it and make their forthcoming generation aware of it"⁴ It is related from Sayyida 'Āisha who narrates from those who were present at the time of the Prophet's ﷺ birth:

"A Jew lived in Makka and on the night of the Prophet's ﷺ birth went to a gathering of the Quraysh and asked: "O Quraysh, has a child been born from amongst you tonight?" The Quraysh replied in the negative. The Jew then told them: "Remember my words carefully for on this night the Prophet of the last nation has been born and O Quraysh, he will be from your clan and on his shoulders will be a cluster of hair." On hearing this the people went to their houses and enquired from their families. They were told a child had been born that night in

the house of 'Abdullāh b. 'Abd al-Muttalib and had been named with the blessed name of Muḥammad. The people went and told the Jew of this who asked to be taken to the newborn. He was taken to the house of Sayyida Āmina and asked to be shown the child. Sayyida Āmina brought the child to the Jew and removed the cloth off its back. The Jew, on seeing the cluster of hair, fainted and fell to the floor. When he regained consciousness the people asked what had happened, he replied with regret: "Prophethood in the *Bani Isra'īl* (the children of Israel) has finished. Rejoice O tribe of Quraysh! the blessing (*baraka*) of this newborn will spread your greatness to both the East and the West."⁵

There are many sources like this in which the scholars of the *ahl al-Kitāb* (People of scripture i.e. the Jews and Christians) gave the good news (prophecies) of the Prophet's ﷺ birth.

Sayyiduna 'Abd al-Muttalib states: "On that night I was at the Ka'ba. I saw the idols fall on their heads into *sajda* (prostration) and heard a voice from the walls of the *ka'ba* proclaim: "*Al-Musajfa* (the Chosen) and *Al-Mukhtar* (the Authorised) has been born. At his hand disbelief will be destroyed and the Ka'ba purified of the worship of idols and he will order the worship of Allāh, the True King and the All-knowing."⁶

The appearance of divine miracles on the night of the birth

The Scholars of prophetic biography in their books have mentioned the mind puzzling events that took place on that blessed night, they include:

- 1: On that night all the idols placed in the *ka'ba* fell into prostration (*sajda*) for this was the night of the birth of the destroyer of idols.
- 2: A light appeared at the time of the Prophet's ﷺ birth by which Sayyida Āmina was able to see the palaces of Syria.
- 3: Imām Ibn Ishāq in his *sīra* narrates from Hishām bin 'Urwa that he heard Sayyida 'Āisha saying that a Jew resided in Makka

for trading purposes and on the night of the Prophet's ﷺ birth approached a gathering of the Quraysh: "O Quraysh, has a child been born from amongst you tonight?" The Quraysh replied in the negative. The Jew then told them: "Remember my words carefully for on this night the Prophet of the last nation has been born and O Quraysh, he will be from your clan and on his shoulders will be a cluster of hair." On hearing this the people went to their houses and enquired from their families. They were told that a child had been born that night in the house of 'Abdullāh bin 'Abd al-Muttalib. The people went and told the Jew of this who asked to be taken to the newborn. He was taken to the house of Sayyida Āmina and he asked to be shown the child. Sayyida Āmina brought the child to the Jew and removed the cloth off the child's back. The Jew, on seeing the cluster of hair, fainted and fell to the floor. When he regained consciousness the people asked what had happened to him, he replied with regret: "Prophethood in the *Bani Isra'īl* has finished. Rejoice O tribe of Quraysh! the blessing (*baraka*) of this newborn will spread your greatness to both the East and the West."

- 4: The palace of Cyrus (Persian Emperor) trembled and 14 of its pillars collapsed that night.
- 5: In the main fire temple of Persia the fire that had burned continuously for 1000 years suddenly extinguished.

There are numerous other events like these which the modern day *sīra* biographers refuse to accept but the contemporary wise scholar Imām Muḥammad Abū Zahra in his *sīra* book *Khātim al-Nabīyīn* mentions these events and strongly rebukes those who refuse to accept them. He states that the basis for accepting narrations should be the soundness of the chain of narration, if the scholars of hadith have questioned the chain of narration then that narration should not be considered reliable but if its chain is reliable and the narrators who related these events are reliable, then such a narration is acceptable.

To claim a narration is unreliable without using these rules is a sign of ignorance of the principles which the scholars have used to determine if a narration is sound or weak.

Shaykh Muhammad Abū Zahra further adds "Allāma Ibn Kathir mentioned such narrations in his *sira* book, he questioned the narration of some and remained silent on others. Thus we do not accept the narrations about which he expressed doubts but we accept those narrations which a research scholar (*muhagiq*) like Ibn Kathir did not criticize and remained silent. We accept them as sound (*sahih*) and there is no doubt in their authenticity."

THE DATE OF THE BIRTH



There is no dispute in the fact that Humanity's Benefactor ﷺ was born on a Monday.

There is also near unanimity of the Ulama that it was in the blessed month of *Rabi' al-Awwal*. Scholars of research have given little credence to the claims that it was the month of Ramadan or *Muharram*.

However there are various claims as to which date in *Rabi' al-Awwal* Humanity's Guide appeared and enlightened a world gripped in the darkness of injustice. Here we present the works of the ulama and researchers, the reading of which will enable you to easily draw your own conclusions.

1. Imām Ibn Jarir al-Tabarī, who along with being an unrivalled exegete (*mufassir*) was also an historian, writes on this subject: "The Prophet ﷺ was born on a Monday, the 12th night of the blessed month of *Rabi' al-Awwal*, in the year of the Elephant."⁶
2. 'Allāma Ibn Khuldūn who is not only acknowledged as an Imām of History and the philosophy of History, but in fact as the very founder of the philosophy of History, writes: "The Prophet ﷺ was born in the year of the Elephant on the twelfth night of *Rabi' al-Awwal* 40 years into the reign of the Cyrus Noshervān."⁷

3. The famous *sīra* biographer 'Allāma ibn Hishām (d. 213 *hijrī*) in his *as-Sīrah al-Nabawīyya* quotes the first biographer of the Prophet ﷺ, Imām Muḥammad bin Ishāq: "The Prophet ﷺ was born on a Monday, the 12th night of *Rabi' al-Awwal* in the year of the Elephant."⁹
4. 'Allāma Abul Ḥasan 'Alī bin Muḥammad al-Māwardī, who is an expert in Islamic politics and whose book *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyya* is still to this day an essential reference for students of politics, writes in his *Ilām al-Nabuwīyya* writes: "Verily he was born fifty days after the incident of the elephant (*Aṣḥāb al-Fil*) and after the death of his father on Monday the 12th of the month of *Rabi' al-Awwal*."⁹

These are the illustrious scholars (and experts) of the sciences of Quran, Sunna and History who have stated that the 12th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* is the day of the birth of the Chosen One (*al-Muṣṭafa*). They did not mention any other dates, thus proving that for them this is the correct and reliable statement.

The contemporary *sīra* biographer Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣādiq Ibrāhīm 'Arijūn, who served as a director of the college of *Uṣūl ud-Dīn* at Jamia' al-Azhar, writes in his book *Muḥammad Rasūlullāh* "Through many sources it has been proven *ṣaḥīḥ* that the Prophet ﷺ was born on the 12th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* in the year of the Elephant, during the reign of the Cyrus Noshervān. According to those ulema who are expert in converting dates between different calendars this was 20 August, 570 years after the birth of the Messiah (ʿĪsa)¹⁰ ﷺ.

'Allāma Muḥammad Ridā, the head of the Cairo University Library, states in his book *Muḥammad Rasūlullāh* "The Prophet ﷺ was born at the time of *fajr* on Monday the 12th of *Rabi' al-Awwal*, which is accordingly the 20th of August 570 AD and the people of Makka go to visit the Prophet's ﷺ birthplace on this date."¹¹

We present several more sources for the reader:

'Allāma Ibn Jawzi presents his research on the date of the Prophet's ﷺ birth in the following way "The Prophet's ﷺ birth took

place on Monday the 10th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* in the year of the Elephant. It has also been said that it was another date of *Rabi' al-Awwal*. Imām Ibn Ishāq claims that the Prophet's ﷺ birth took place on the 12th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* in the year of the Elephant."¹²

Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Abul Fātiḥ Muḥammad bin Muḥammad bin Yahya bin Sayyid an-Nās ash-Shāfi' al-Andalusī in his book '*Uyūn al-Aḥbar*' writes:

'Our Master and Prophet, Muḥammad, the messenger of Allāh ﷺ, was born on Monday the 12th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* in the year of the Elephant. Some claim that was 50 days after the incident of the Elephant'

He then goes on to relate the claims of the 2nd and 8th of *Rabi' al-Awwal*.¹³ 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr, who in *tafsīr*, hadith and history was unrivalled, presents his research on this topic in '*as-Sīra an-Nabawīyya*' as follows:

'The Prophet's ﷺ blessed birth took place on Monday. Imām Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* relates from Gaylān bin Jarīr, from Abu Qatāda that a bedouin enquired from the Prophet ﷺ about the fast of Monday. The Prophet ﷺ replied it was the day in which he was born and the day in which the first revelation came to him.'

After this 'Allāma ibn Kathīr quotes Ibn 'Abbās' statement "The Prophet's ﷺ birth was on a Monday, his arrival in Madīna was on a Monday, his leaving this world was on a Monday and the day in which he lifted the black stone (*ḥajar al-aswad*) and placed it into the wall of the *ka'ba* was Monday". He then states that those who claim that the day of the birth was Friday the 17th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* are wrong and far from the truth.

Some have claimed it to have been the 2nd of this month and some the 8th and others the 10th. The claims of the 8th are related by Ibn Ḥazm and al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Kabīr bin Mūsa al-Khwarizmi supports this claim. Others have chosen the 12th and this is also the statement of Ibn Ishāq.

Ibn Abī Shayba in his *Musannaf* has also narrated from 'Aḥḥān from Sa'īd bin Mīna that both Jābir and Ibn 'Abbās stated that the Prophet ﷺ was born in the year of the elephant, on Monday the 12th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* and on this day was his annunciation (*bir'itha*), his night journey (*mir'āji*) to the skies, his migration and his day of passing. This is what is well known amongst the majority.¹⁴ *Wallāhu 'ālamu bi'ḥawābi'*

The first narrator of the above ḥadīth is Abū Bakr bin Abī Shayba, about whom Abū Zahrā Rāzī (d.264) said that he had not seen a better memoriser (*ḥāfiẓ*) of ḥadīth than him. The ḥadīth master (*mūḥadith*) Ibn Hibbān states that Abū Bakr was a great memoriser (*ḥāfiẓ*) of Ḥadīth. The second narrator of the ḥadīth is 'Aḥḥān, whom the ḥadīth masters (*mūḥadithin*) hold to be a high standing *Imām at-Thiqā Sāhib ad-Dhābi wa al-Iqān*. The third narrator is Sa'īd bin Mīna who is from amongst the reliable (*thiqā*) narrators.

(in addition to this) This narration of sound chain (*sahih*) is related about two illustrious companions of the Prophet: Sayyiduna Jābir bin 'Abdullāh and Sayyiduna 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās.

In light of the above tradition the disputing of the 12th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* by an historian or expert of astronomy is not acceptable. Mawlāna Sayyid 'Abd al-Quddūs al-Hāshimī was not just a scholar but also very skillful in the art of date conversion and even wrote a book on this science entitled *Taqwīm-e-Tārīkhī (Conversion of dates)*. According to him the correct date of birth is the 12th of *Rabi' al-Awwal*.

The famous *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* scholar Nawāb Muḥammad Ṣadiq Ḥasan Khān writes that the blessed birth took place in Makka at the time of the rising of *fajr* on Monday the 12th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* in the year of the Elephant. This is the statement of the majority of Scholars and Ibn Jawzī agrees with it.¹⁵

The Grand Mufti of the ulema of Deoband Mawlāna Mufti Muḥammad Shafī, in *Khāṭim al-Anbiyā'* writes:

In the year in which the attack of the people of the elephant took place, on the 12th of its month of *Rabi' al-Awwal* the real reason for the creation of life (*Ala Dhann*) revolution: the pride of the children of Adam, the reason behind the safe passage of the Prophet Nuh's ship, the supplication (*du'ā*) of Ibrahim and the fulfilment of Mūsa and 'Isa's prophecies, in other words, our Master Muḥammad Rasūlullāh ﷺ appeared in this world!¹⁶

Some *sira* biographers of the subcontinent have based their writings on Mahmūd Pāsha al-Falākī (the Astronomer) and stated that the 12th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* could not have been a Monday because Monday fell on the 9th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* that year. Consequently the correct date of birth has to be the 9th of *Rabi' al-Awwal*. But the most interesting point is that these people do not even know with certainty Mahmūd Pāsha's own country of origin.

'Allāma Shibli Nūmānī and Qāḍī Sulaymān Mansūrpuri claim that Mahmūd Pāsha was an inhabitant of Egypt. Mufti Muḥammad Shafī believed him to be *Makkī* (of Makka), whilst Mawlāna Hifẓ ar-Rahmān Syahārvi tells of him as a famous astronomer of Constantinople. Despite my best endeavours I have been unable to locate Mahmūd Pāsha Falākī's original book or journal. Nevertheless it has come to be known that Pāsha Falākī's original article was in French and was first translated into Arabic under the name *'Narā'ij al-Aḥḥānī'* (the consequences of understanding) by Ahmad Zakī Affendi. Mawlāwī Syed Muḥiyuddīn Khān, High Court Judge, Hyderabad rendered it into Urdu in 1898 and it was printed by Nowl-Kishwor Press but this translation can neither be found.

Even if Mahmūd Pāsha Falākī had undertaken a piece of research using the science of astronomy we cannot, and nor is it appropriate to, use that to simply disregard the narrations of the *sahāba*; *fabi'in* and the classic scholars because astronomy, like other scientific knowledge, is lucid (ever evolving and changing) and no inference based upon it can be considered definitive and final.

One must also remember the interesting point that the use of the *hijri* years was only initiated during the caliphate of Sayyiduna

'Umar and the first day this calendar was implemented in the Islamic world was *Yawn al-Khamīs* (Thursday) 20 *Jamādi al-Ulā* 17AH (12 July 638AD). Calendar records exist for dates after that but we have no date records before that. Additionally, prior to the revelation no single calendar held prominence amongst the Arabs. The Arabs would often, at their discretion, change the months and on several occasions had 13 or 14 months in a year. *Tafsīr Dīā ul-Qurān* explains that the 12 months of the lunar year would (on occasions) be increased by adding the month of 'Kabisā'. Thus it is evident that before the announcement of Prophethood changes took place and it is impossible for us to find out in which years these changes did and did not take place.¹⁷

Even before Mahmūd Pasha a number of people had attempted to ascertain the date of birth using astronomical calculations. 'Allāma Qasālāni writes that the *Ahl uz-Zīch* are unanimous that Monday was on the 8th of *Rabi' al-Awwal*. This shows that whenever attempts are made to derive the date from astronomy and mathematics they will all result in different dates. Thus instead of that we have to accept the statements of the classic *sīra* biographers; hadith masters (*muhaddithīn*); exegetes (*mufasssīrīn*); pious predecessors (*tabī'īn*) and companions of the Prophet ﷺ (*ṣahāba*).

The above discussion has proven that Muḥammad, *al-Muṣṭafā, al-Aḥmad, al-Mujtabā* arrived in this world in his human body on the morning of Monday, the 12th of *Rabi' al-Awwal* in the year of the Elephant. Having presented the statements of the ulema I now wish to present a statement of the sincere and unbiased Egyptian scholar, who is unrivalled in knowledge; wisdom; virtue and piety. For me, this statement is conclusive and provides assurance and satisfaction for those in search of the truth. Imām Muḥammad Abū Zahrah in his *sīra* book *Khātam un-Nabīyyīn* explains:

'The great majority of the ulema of *riwāya* (narration) agree that the birth took place in *Rabi' al-Awwal* in the 'Ālam al-Fil (year of the elephant) on the 12th night'

After this he quotes the statements of others and comments upon them in the following way:

The Date of the Birth

'Against the statements of the majority of the ulema these narrations are not *mashhūr* (well known or widely accepted). In the scientific field of narration priority is not given to logic but to the narration.'¹⁸

The Shaykh al-Hadith of the Indian Sub-continent Shaykh 'Abd al-Haq Muhaddith ad-Dihlawī in his renowned book '*Madārij an-Nabīwwa'* discusses the date of birth 'Know well that the opinion of the scholars of prophetic biography (*ahl us-siyar*) and history is that the birth of the Prophet ﷺ took place in the Year of the Elephant, 40 or 55 days after the event of the Elephant. The latter is more correct (*ṣahīh*) than the others. It is well known that it was the month of *Rabi' al-Awwal* and the 12th day. Some ulema have claimed to agree with this statement, i.e. All ulema are agreed upon this.'

After discussing this joyous, heart endearing and soul enchanting event he composed, or rather they composed themselves, several verses in praise of the Prophet ﷺ. Read these and endeavour to enlighten the eye of your heart:

*The night of Muḥammad's birth was so enlightened
From the gates of Makkā to Syria everything sparkled!*

*Nay, not just Makkā and Syria, but all East and West
To everywhere did the nur of Muḥammad quest!*

*With his light (nūr) the Earth's corners were illuminated
With his character the whole Universe was enflamanted!*

*In return is a place in the sky of honour and exaltation
whoever with a sincere heart becomes the dust of this station!*

*How could the hot pestilent winds bring drought
to this grass saturated by thy merciful cloud!*

THE BIRTH OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

*Praise be to Allah for the virtues of deen and dunya
that Haqqi did receive from the court of this King
(Haqqi - nom de plume).*

THE HOLY PLACE OF BIRTH



The present-day location of the house of the Prophet ﷺ is believed to be a piece of land which first kissed the delicate feet of Allāh's beloved and so became elevated was first part of the estate of Sayyiduna Aqil bin Abi Talib, Hajjāj's brother, Muḥammad bin Yūsuf al-Thaqafi, later bought it for 100,000 *dinars* and incorporated it into his house. As the house was made out of white lime, and so too was its plastering, the house became renowned as *al-Bay'atā* (The white). For a considerable amount of time it was known as *Dār Ibn Yūsuf* (the house of Ibn Yūsuf).

During Caliph Harūn Rashid's reign his dutiful and bountiful wife Lady Zubayda visited Makkā to fulfil her obligation of Hajj. She purchased (during the visit) this house and had it pulled down and replaced with a mosque. However Ibn Wahbiya states that when Harūn Rashid's mother Khairatūn came for Hajj she separated from Ibn Yūsuf's home, the part in which the Prophet ﷺ was born and built a mosque on that spot.

It is possible that it was Harūn Rashid's mother who had the honour of building a mosque there first, Lady Zubayda may have come to Makkā later and rebuilt it in a grander manner.¹⁹ Allāma Abū'l Qāsim as-Suhayli in *ar-Rawḍ al-Uhṣ* states only 'When Lady Zubayda came for hajj she built a mosque there.'²⁰

Shaykh Ibrahim 'Arjūn writes 'The place of the Prophet's ﷺ birth in Makkā is well known. Over time it has undergone a number of

THE BIRTH OF THE PROPHET

changes, in our time it has been converted into a Dār al-Hadith. When I was in Makka in 1370/71 AH I saw the foundations of the Dār al-Hadith building that was being built there.²¹

Today, 1408AH, a library has been built on the site which opens only at selected times. It is generally closed.

GATHERING IN CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH



On numerous occasions in the Holy Quran we have been ordered to express gratitude for Allāh's rewards and blessings. Allāh proclaims: *{So eat of the lawful and good food which Allah hath provided for you, and thank the bounty of your Lord if it is Him ye serve}* (16:114)

On another occasion it is stated: *{So seek your provision from Allah, and serve Him, and give thanks unto Him, (for) unto Him ye will be brought back}* (29.17)

Allāh has made this point in another beautiful way; if we are grateful for His blessings He will increase them but if we are ungrateful He will inflict upon us severe punishment. Allāh states: *{And when your Lord proclaimed: If ye give thanks, I will give you more; but if ye are thankless, lo! My punishment is dire}*

In brief, there are countless verses which command us to express gratitude for Allāh's rewards. There are many verses in which Allāh has again and again aroused His servants by reminding them that if they express gratitude for His blessings He will increase them further. But if they become rejecters of His blessings they will be deprived of those blessings and be thrown into the furnace of painful punishment.

Water, air, light, hearing; sight, heart, health, youth and well being are all blessings from Allāh and it is compulsory to be grateful

for them. Thus if it is necessary to be grateful for these temporary (perishable) blessings then reflect upon the necessity to express gratitude for the arrival and prophethood of the personification of mercy, the greatest guide and the benefactor of the universe. Is there any favour greater than this favour or any blessing better than this blessing? The one who joined (and strengthened) the broken connection between the servant and the Creator, who awoke the dormant fortune of humanity, who decorated the ruined destiny of Adam's offspring and who came not as a mercy for one tribe, nation or time but came like a shower of mercy for the whole of Allāh's creation, whose showering of grace was not confined to a time or place but quenched, with the Pure water of the marīā (recognition) of the Lord, each and every one. He came to put on the Straight Path those who had lost their way. He opened the door to the proximity of Allāh for both big and small. Is it not compulsory for us to be grateful for this great blessing and eternal favour? By expressing gratitude for this unbounded kindness of Allāh will we not, as according to His promise, be entitled to further blessings whilst those who do not perform thanksgiving for this glorious reward, will they not become the subject of the warning of Allāh's punishment?

The arrival of the Chief of the Worlds and the pride of all creation is that great reward which the True Benefactor specifically mentioned (as follows) {*Allāh verily hath shown grace to the believers by sending unto them a messenger of their own who reciteth unto them His revelations, and causeth them to grow, and teacheth them the Scripture and wisdom; although before (he came to them) they were in flagrant error*} (3:164)

A defining characteristic of this reward is that whilst all other rewards were for both the general and specific, believers and disbelievers, on this occasion only the believers have been decorated with this kindness and grace.

The servants of *al-Muṣṭafā* (the chosen one) have throughout history expressed gratitude to Allāh for this greatest of favours. In line with the customs and tendencies of the time they have

expressed appreciation in many different ways but (despite the differing forms) the passion for gratitude remained the soul and body of each act. Those fortunate ones who recognise the worth and value of this blessing will until eternity, and in accordance with their understanding and capacity, continue to express gratitude to their most Merciful and Generous Lord.

It is self evident that when one is apportioned a blessing one's heart fills with cheer and happiness. One recognises the significance of the blessing in accordance with one's perception of the worth of that blessing. One's happiness and joy is proportionate to that. But if the receipt of a blessing brings no waves of joy then this undoubtedly signifies that the recipient attaches no significance to it. Had he not received the blessing he would not have felt any regret or remorse.

Having received this blessing and there being no joy?! The moths of the light of *al-Muṣṭafā* (the chosen one) are not so ungrateful! The appearance of the full moon of Prophethood brought the brightness of happiness and joy into the courtyard of their lives. The buds in their hearts blossomed and though knowing they could never fulfil the right of gratitude they, according to their understanding, fall before their Lord in a prostration of gratitude and began singing His praise and eulogy and foresaked their lives and hearts upon the eternal beauty of His beloved.

THE FALSE VIEWS REGARDING THE MAWLID



On seeing these expressions of gratitude and happiness some claimants to knowledge and wisdom fall into an uncontrollable rage and make the humble thankful and grateful servants of Allāh the target of a heavy outburst of blame and reproachment. Have these people not studied the proclamation of Allāh {*Say: In the bounty of Allāh and in His mercy: therein let them rejoice. It is better than what they hoard*} (10:58)

This verse commands that whenever the bounty (*fadh*) and mercy (*rahma*) of Allāh appears do not to sit with long faces nor turn the pots and pans upside down (as is done when one is in mourning) nor put out the burning flame for that is not a sign of gratitude but a rejection of the blessing so do not do any of this, rather (*therein let them rejoice*), express happiness and joy. There is no need to explain how happiness should be expressed for when the heart's emotion of joy becomes uncontrollable it finds its own method of expression.

The muslim community (*umma*) has for centuries expressed its gratitude for this greatest of blessings. Every year in each large and small city and settlement of all Islamic countries celebrations of the *eid milād an-nabi* are organised. In these days and nights gatherings of *dikir* (remembrance) and *fikr* (reflection) take place in which the

The False View Regarding the Mawlid

magnificence of Allāh and the elevated and heart endearing status of Allāh's beloved is mentioned. People are told of the commandments of this natural religion, the ulama deliver lectures, liharati read their writings whilst poets recite their compositions in expression of their devotion and love. And with the soul enchanting melodies of prayer (*salawāt*) and salutation (*salām*) the whole air becomes fragrant and enlightened. The people of good prepare food for the poor and with charity (*sadaqa*) and alms the needs of the needy are fulfilled. All in all it seems as if a new spring has blossomed in the garden of Islam.

Imām Abū Shāma, who was the hadith teacher of Imām Nawawī, the commentator of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, writes:

'The best new action of our time is that each year on the day of *mawlid* people give charity (*sadaqa*) (and alms) and in an expression of happiness decorate their houses. This is because there are many benefits in this: the poor are dealt with in a kind and gentle way and the person doing so reveals that in his heart burns the fire of love and respect for Allāh's beloved. The greatest thing is that Allāh created the Prophet ﷺ and sent him as a mercy. This was His great favour upon His servants and this expression of happiness and joy is a means of thanking Him.'²²

Take a look at the statement of another hadith master (*muhaddith*), Imām Sakhāwī, he says:

'In its present form the celebration of the *mawlid* began after the third generation and since then the people of Islam in all Islamic countries and in all the large cities have held gatherings to celebrate the *mawlid*. During these nights the poor are consoled with alms and charity and the event of the Prophet's ﷺ birth is relayed to the people with great endeavour. Through the (*baraka*) blessings of these actions Allāh showers them with His perfect grace.'

Further read the view of a third hadith master (*muhaddith*), who was fearless in his ruthless criticism of weak (*da'if*) hadith, 'Allāma

Abu'l Faraj 'Abd ur-Rahmān Ibn al-Jawzi:

'Ibn al-Jawzi says that of the specific blessings of the *mawlid* gathering is that whoever commemorates it, through its blessing, remains in the protection of Allāh for the whole year and it is a glad tidings for the swift attainment of one's needs and wants.'

The ulama have also shed light on when the *mawlid* gathering was held and by whom.

Imām Ibn Jawzi writes that that the king of Irbil, al-Malik al-Muzaffar Abū Sa'īd initiated it and the famous hadith master of the time Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Dahya wrote a book for this purpose called *'ar-tanwir fī mawlid al-bashir an-nadhīr'*. When this book was presented to King Muzaffar he rewarded Ibn Dahya with 1000 gold coins. The King would organise a *mawlid* gathering in *Rabi' al-Awwal* of each year. He was wise, learned, brave and a man of action. He was astute and known for administering justice and his reign was long, and when he died in 630 he had laid siege to the City of Acca that was occupied by the Christians. His visible and invisible life was very likeable.

The grandson of Ibn Jawzi in his writing '*Mir'ātu Zamān'* describes Malik Muzaffar's invitation on the occasion of the *mawlid*, in which the contemporary great scholars and sufs would participate. The account of this invitation is from one who participated in the invitation, he collects that he himself had seen 5000 heads of sheep and goats; 10,000 hens, 100,000 plates of pudding and 30,000 bowls of sweet. Malik Muzaffar would invest all the ulama and sufs who attended with a robe of honour. Upon this festival of *mawlid* he would spend 300,000 *dinārs*.

'Allāma Muḥammad Ridā in his book of *sira 'Muḥammad Rasūlillāh'* mentioned the above events and continued this theme. A summary of which is translated below for the reader:

The Sultan of Algiers Abū Ḥamma Mīsa would, with great preparation and pomp, commemorate the night of *mawlid*, just as the Sultans of the Maghrib and the Caliphs of Andalusia used

The False View Regarding the Mawlid

to organise and commemorate this festival both before and in his time.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū 'Abdullāh al-Tunīsī in *Rāḥ al-Arwāḥ* records an eyewitness account of a *mawlid* festival organised by the Sultan of Tulumistān:

'On the night of the *mawlid* Abū Ḥamma organises a very large invitation at the Dār al-Ḥukūmā (Government House) Tulumistān to which all the people, important and ordinary, are invited. The whole place is covered in expensive carpet. There are large pillows on the ground with huge lamps which from far seem like pillars and the tablespread; the aroma from the stoves is such that it seems as if molten gold was pouring out of them. Everyone is presented with colourful and delicious food, as if bouquets of flowers were being put before them. The colourfulness of the food doubles each and everyone's appetite, it's brightness lights up the eyes and its sweet aroma fragrances the senses. All the people were seated according to their rank. Everyone's face was filled with honour and veneration. After that the eulogists recite their poems and then a system of lectures and counselling continues to turn people away from sin and arouse a desire for obedience and worship (*'ibāda*). All these activities were scheduled in a way that prevented lethargy or fatigue amongst the attendants and which brought tranquillity and pleasure to the heart and comfort to the nafs.

A royal chest covered in a multi-coloured Yemeni shroud would be placed next to the Sultan. There were as many doors as hours in the night. On the stroke of each hour, a door would be knocked a number of times equal to the hour. The door would open and a maidservant would come out with a list of people to receive rewards and accordingly the Sultan would distribute rewards. This process would continue until the call to prayer (*adhān*) at dawn.'

This *sira* biographer also described the celebrations in Egypt of his own time.

Some vehement people label the organisation of the *mawlid* gathering as an innovation (*bid'a*) that is contemptible and misguided. We are undoubtedly commanded to refrain from innovation (*bid'a*) but we first need to understand the meaning of *bid'a*. If *bid'a* refers to the act that was not present in the time of the Prophet ﷺ or rightly guided Caliphs (*Khulafā' ar-rāshidin*) and only came into being afterwards and is misguided and the fuel of the fire then it is not just the *mawlid* that is subject to this but every member of the community (*umma*) would struggle to escape from this definition! Those sciences for whose study many great Islamic universities and schools have been established and upon which millions of dollars have been spent, most of them are sciences which were either not present in the age of good or if they were, not in their present form; for example Morphology (*sarf*); Syntax (*nahw*); Semantics (*ma'ānī*); Rethoric (*balaghā*); Principles of Jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and Principles of Ḥadith Literature (*uṣūl al-ḥadīth*) etc. These were initiated after (the age of *khair*), and the ulema who compiled them and dedicated their precious lives and invaluable skills and time to them in formulating these sciences and taking them to their pinnacle, were they all guilty of *bid'a* and, as is the fatwa of these people, the fuel of Hellfire? If so, who from the previous 14 centuries of Islam would be left in Paradise? In a similar way the Sciences of Quran, Sunna and Fiqh were not compiled in the age of *khair*, they too are the fruits of the round the clock labour and effort of the scholars and the learned (*ʿulamā*). So is the spending of millions on Universities to teach these sciences which are *bid'a* contrary to the teachings of Islam? Are they an invitation to the wrath of Allāh? Where in the time of the Prophet ﷺ were these grand mosques with their sky kissing minarets and adorned prayer niches (*mihnābs*), will they order these to be destroyed? In their frenzy of labelling *bid'a* will they repossess the tanks, missiles and fighter planes from their

armies and throw the soldiers into battle with bows and arrows? Their definition of *bid'a* is indiscriminate and applies to all these things, why are these people wasting their time by unsuccessfully attempting to strangle the natural deen of Islam and force its all-encompassing teachings and nourishing spirit into their restricted and closed minds.

We ask these people to place in their minds the definition and explanation of *bid'a* provided by the ulema of Islam and only then will they realise the shallowness of their criticism and slander. The ulema of Islam explain that there are 5 types of *bid'a*: *wājib* (compulsory), *mustahab* (recommended), *makrūh* (disliked), *mubāh* (permissible) and *ḥarām* (forbidden).

1. If there is (religious) good (or betterment) in the new thing then it is *wājib* (compulsory). Examples of this are the teaching and study of the sciences of morphology (*sarf*) and syntax (*nahw*) etc and the repudiation of heretics and falsehood. Even though these sciences were not found in the time of the Prophet ﷺ they are compulsory now in order to understand the Quran & Sunna. Similarly the rejection of the false sects that were not to be found in the time of the Prophet ﷺ is compulsory upon the ulema of the day.

2. Those (new) things which are beneficial to and aid the people are *mustahab* (recommended). These include the construction of rest rooms for travellers for it provides a place of rest for them, or the giving of call to prayer (*adhān*) by a *muaddhin* from the top of a minaret so his voice travels further, or establishing ordinary schools to spread the light of knowledge. These are good and recommended acts.

3. *Mubāh* (permissible) includes the wide variety in food and drink; wearing good clothes and using sifted flour. Even though during the time of the Prophet ﷺ the flour was unsifted and the Prophet

- ❁ used unsifted flour if someone today sifts his flour before making bread that is *mubāh* and not a *bid'a* or misguidance and he should not be condemned to hell!
4. A new act in which there is waste is *makrūh* (disliked). Under this comes the unnecessary decoration of mosques and books.
5. *Ḥarām* (forbidden) is the act which is contrary to Sunna and for which there is no legal (*shar'i*) expedient.

Imām Abū Zakariyya Muhiyyudin bin Sharaf an-Nawawī has discussed the word *bid'a* in detail in his books '*Sharh Ṣaḥīḥ Muslimī*' and '*Tahdhīb al-Asmā wa al-Luġāt*'. The study of these texts will clarify the meaning of *bid'a* and will extinguish any doubts that may worry the mind and heart. I am reproducing a few sentences from *Tahdhīb al-Asmā wa al-Luġāt* for the readers so that they can study them and assure themselves:

'Legally *bid'a*, with a *kasra* under the *bā*, refers to the invention which was not in the blessed time of the Prophet ﷺ. It is of two types: good (*ḥasana*) and bad (*qabīḥa*). Shaykh Abū Muḥammad 'Abdul Aziz b. 'Abd as-Salām, upon whose Imāmate and rank the whole community (*umma*) is in agreement and all recognise his expertise in all (academic) fields, at the end of his book *al-Qawā'id* writes 'The following are the types of *bid'a*: *wājib*, *ḥarām*, *mustahab*, *makrūh*, and *mubāh*.'²³

Imām Abū Zakariyya Muhiyyudin bin Sharaf an-Nawawī in his *Sharh Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* whilst discussing the hadith '*qullu bid'a ḍalāla*' (all *bid'a* is misguided) writes:

'Even though *qullu bid'a ḍalāla* (every *bid'a* is misguided) appears general it is in fact specific, i.e. not all *bid'a* is misguided but most is. Literally *bid'a* refers to the act for which there is no previous example. The ulema state that there are 5 types of *bid'a*: *wājib*, *mustahab*, *ḥarām*, *makrūh* and *mubāh*. Of the *wājib* is the

production of proofs and reasonings in repudiation of heretics and innovators. Examples of *mustahab* are the writing of books on various sciences and arts; building of schools and rest rooms for travellers etc. An example of *mubāh* is the cooking of many different types of delicious foods, whilst *ḥarām* and *makrūh* are clear.'²⁴

The above Imām (Nawawī) in '*Tahdhīb al-Asmā wa al-Luġāt*' gives an example of forbidden (*ḥarām*) *bid'a* as the false sects of the *Jabariyya*, *Murjiyya* and *Mujassima*. An example of a disliked innovation is the decoration of mosques at a time when there is no need or purpose for it.²⁵

However the holding of the *mawlid* gathering is neither against any proven Sunna nor does it invoke the undertaking of a forbidden (*ḥarām*) act. Instead it is an act of thanksgiving for a blessing of Allāh and the expressing of gratitude is proven from many verses (of the Quran). Furthermore the verse {*therein let them rejoice*} makes expressing happiness for a bounty (*fadl*) and favour (*ni'ma*) of Allāh a divine commandment.

Allāma Ibn Hajar in answering the objectors states that the holding of the *mawlid* gathering is not without foundation for its basis is found in the *sunna* of the Prophet ﷺ. For this purpose he quoted the following hadith from the *Ṣaḥīḥain* (Bukharī and Muslim).

'When the Prophet ﷺ came to Madīna he found the Jews fasting on the day of 'Ashūra (the 10th of Muharram). He asked them about it and they replied it was the day Pharaoh drowned and Mūsa was victorious and they fasted in thanksgiving. The Prophet ﷺ replied 'We have more right to Mūsa than you.' (Thus the Prophet ﷺ fasted and guided his community to not fast just once, but on two days).

It is narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukharī* that when Abu Lahab's slave girl, Thuwayba, gave him the good news of the Prophet's ﷺ birth he freed her in happiness of his nephew's arrival. Despite being a disbeliever

and the one in whose condemnation a whole surah of the Quran was revealed the blessing of expressing happiness over the birth of the Prophet ﷺ causes him to receive, every Monday (the Prophet's ﷺ day of birth), a drop of water and a lightened punishment.

The Ḥāfiẓ of Shām Shams ud-Dīn Muhammad bin Naṣīr eloquently points out:

'When a disbeliever, in whose condemnation was revealed Sūra 'Tabbat yadā' and who will stay in Hell forever has his punishment lightened every Monday for expressing happiness on the Prophet's birth What do you consider of the servant who his whole life rejoiced over the birth and died a believer?'

With sincerity we respectfully urge these people to leave their aggressive attitude. The blessed birth of Allāh's beloved is a great favour upon all the *umma*. Come, let us all this day fall into a prostration of gratitude before Allāh. Let us jointly sing His praise and rejoice and let us in every way, staying within the limits of *sharia*, express our joy. Let us organise gatherings where the Prophet's ﷺ *umma* can come together and where the *ulema* can make them aware of the *sira* of Muḥammad and in which we can present to the Prophet ﷺ, as an expression of faith and love, colourful bouquets of *salawat* and *salaam*. In all this we must be ever vigilant that no act takes place which is against the commandments of Allāh or the *sunna* of the Prophet ﷺ.

In this we are all agreed and our unconditional support is for those reformers who are striving towards this pious end.

The birth of the Prophet ﷺ came as a bearer of eternal joy and true happiness and because of it everything in the universe was glad and joyful. Angels performed heavenly thanksgiving and it was as if spring had come to both the Heaven and Earth. However there was one individual who was crying, busy complaining and wailing and shedding tears over his bad fortune and disappointment. This

individual was the cursed Iblis (Satan). 'Allāma Abul Qāsim Suhayfī writes:

'Only four times in his life has the cursed Iblis cried: firstly when he was cursed, secondly when he was dragged down from his high pinnacle to his abject position, thirdly when the Prophet ﷺ was born and (finally) when *sūra fatiha* was revealed.'

'Allāma Ibn Kathīr has quoted this text of 'Allāma Suhayfī in *As-Sira an-Nabawiyya* and Ibn Sayyid an-Nās in 'Uyūn al-Athar' also mentions this identical narration.

'Allāma Aḥmad bin Zaini Dahlan writes in his *as-Sira an-Nabawiyya*:

'It is narrated from Ikrīma that on the day of the Prophet's ﷺ birth Iblis (Satan) saw the stars falling. He said to his followers 'Tonight has been born the one who will scupper our plans (system)'. His followers advised him 'Go and touch him (the Prophet) and put him into a trance'. As Iblis came towards the Prophet ﷺ Allāh sent Gibrīl who kicked him and he fell far away.'²⁶

Continuity is implicit within it i.e. it re-occurs with every new moment. Accordingly Muhammad refers to the one who is praised continuously at every moment and every point in time:

Allāma Suhayfī in explaining this name writes 'Linguistically Muhammad is the one who is praised again and again because the passive participle (verb form *ii*), like the words *mudarrab* and *munaddab*, implies repetition of the verb time after time.'

His other famous and renowned name is Ahmad and this is the name by which Sayyiduna Mūsa and 'Isa referred to him. Ahmad is a noun of pre-eminence and describes the one who undertakes the most praise of his Lord, more than any other.

Every moment of the Prophet's ﷺ life abounds with the praise of his Most Generous Lord and his every act of praise and glory is unique and most perfect but his praise will be at its pinnacle and in its full glory on the day of judgement when he will stand before the throne and fall into prostration. At that time Allāh will expand the Prophet's ﷺ heart for His praise and will have opened the doors to the treasure chest of eternal praise. His enlightened heart will be like a restless ocean surging waves and his most beneficent tongue will be dispersing pearls of praise picked from the bottom of his heart and through this all on that day will be overcome with exhilaration and ecstasy. In response to this unique and unrivalled Praise and Glory Allāh will raise His beloved to the station of Mahmūd (the praised one) and place the flag of *hamd* (praise) in his hand. What will be the spectacle of the rays emitting from the light of Allāh and the radiance of Ahmad?! Everything will be trance-like singing *Subhānallāh, Subhānallāh, Al-Ḥamdullillāh, Allāhu Akbar*. We sinners and wrongdoers will also be saved today!

The Prophet ﷺ was first Ahmad, the one who praised and glorified his Lord the most, and with the barakah of this he became Muhammad, whose chants of praise and applause will be raised again and again until eternity. The tongues will not go silent, the pens will not stand still, the supply of pearls of Meaning and Recognition will not be exhausted and nor will those who bead necklaces from such

HIS NAME & SUCKLING



His blessed name 'Muhammad'

According to one narration the Prophet ﷺ was born circumcised but according to another on the seventh day (after the birth) 'Abd al-Muttalib invited all the Quraysh and performed the circumcision and sacrificed an animal as *aqīqa*' and laid out a magnificent feast. After eating his tribes people asked 'O 'Abd al-Muttalib, what name have you chosen for the son in whose happiness you have organised this magnificent feast and honoured us?' He replied 'I have chosen Muhammad'. The tribespeople were very surprised he had not chosen a name of one of his household (as was the tradition of the time). He explained 'I want both Allāh in the sky and the creation on the earth to praise him.'

Explanation of the word 'Muhammad'

Arabic philologists explain that Muhammad is the name given to that which contains (collects within it) all the good attributes.

Imām Abū Zahra explains the name Muhammad as follows:

'It is a *'sigah'* (word form) that denotes an action that is performed, or occurs, again and again and at every moment.

pearls relent! New flowers will continue to blossom in the garden of the Chosen One and the good-natured florists will continue to fill their baskets with them and by arranging them into musk fragrant bouquets will continue to decorate the world!

Before the Prophet's ﷺ birth into this world it had become well known that the time of the last Prophet was nearing and that his name would be Muhammad. Some people had hoped that it would be their child who would be honored, Ibn Fawrak in his *Kitab al-Fusul* mentions three other children with this name and states that there was also a fourth child who he could not remember. 'Allāma Sayyid an-Nās lists six children with the name Muhammad but none of them ever claimed prophethood and nor did anyone recognise them to be a Prophet. In this way Allāh kept the Prophethood of His beloved free from all kinds of confusion so that no simple person mistakenly thought of a non Prophet as a Prophet and thus strayed from the path of truth.

The Prophet ﷺ has many names which reflect his many different qualities and attributes but there are five names which he himself specifically mentioned. Imām Tirmidhī narrates the following ḥadīth from Jubair bin Mu'tim:

The Prophet ﷺ said 'Verily I have many names, I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad, I am Māhī (the one eradicates), through whom Allāh will eradicate *kufir* (disbelief); I am Hāshir (the gatherer), the people will gather at my feet on the Day of the Test and I am 'Āqib, after whom there is no Prophet.'

Imām Tirmidhī has classified this as sound (*sahīh*) whilst Imām Bukhārī, Muslim and Nasa'ī narrated the ḥadīth of Jubair.

Suckling

Sayyida Āmina was the first to suckle the light of her eyes, then this honour fall to Thuwayba, who was Abu Lahab's slave girl. She was the first to give him the news that a son had been born to his deceased brother and in the joy of his nephew's birth he freed her.

In return for this expression of joy for the last fourteen hundred years this eternally damned man has been receiving cool water to drink each Monday and will continue to do so until judgement day. Apart from Thuwayba there were many other women who had the honour of suckling the Prophet ﷺ; Khawla bint Mundhir, Umm Aymān, Halima Sa'diyya and another lady of the Banu Sa'ad. However the one with the greatest honour was Halima Sa'diyya who suckled him continuously for two years.

It was customary for the Quraysh and other noble Arab tribes to pass their children over to suckling women. There were many reasons for this:

- So that their wives could be free to serve them
- So that their children could grow up in the desert environment and become proficient in eloquent Arabic
- So that their children could benefit from the pure and clean desert environment and become healthy and strong. Additionally they could become accustomed to the hardships and difficulties of the desert from an early age.
- So that they could attain the physical power, strength of bones and firmness of muscles of their forefather Ma'ad. Sayyiduna 'Umar used to advise the Muslims 'Build the body of Ma'ad, make hard work your trait and firm up your body and muscles.'

Thus the leaders of the Quraysh and Arab chiefs of the time preferred their offspring to spend their childhood with the desert tribes rather than in the comfort and luxury of their mother's bosoms; so that the abrasions of its sandy and rugged stony land could strengthen their bodies and after learning their eloquent and rich language they could become brilliant orators and leaders.

One day Abū Bakr Siddīq asked the Prophet ﷺ 'I have not seen anyone more eloquent than you!' The Prophet ﷺ replied: 'Why wouldn't I be for I am from the Quraysh tribe and suckled in the Banu Sa'ad.'

'ABD AL-MUṬṬALIB &
'ABDULLAH



'*Abd al-Muṭṭalib*

'Abd al-Manāf (the Prophet's great grandfather) had four sons, the eldest was Hāshim and the youngest was Muṭṭalib. On a trade mission to Syria Hāshim passed through a settlement of Yathrib and stopped for a few days with 'Amr bin Labid al-Khazraji, the chief of the Banu Najjār tribe. During his stay he asked 'Amr for his daughter Salama's hand in marriage. 'Amr happily agreed to his daughters marriage to the Qurayshi chief Hāshim. They married but 'Amr asked that when the time came for his daughter to give birth she should do so here in her own house. Hāshim left for Syria and after completing his trade returned to his in-laws and took his wife with him to Makka. After some time she became pregnant and near the time of the birth, as per his promise, Hāshim sent his wife back to her father's home. When the child was born it had some white hair on it's head and was thus given the name Shayba (old man). Hāshim then left with his trading caravan for Syria but passed away there.

Shayba and his mother were thus left in *Yathrib*. Seven years had passed when by chance a man from the Banu Harth bin 'Abd al-Manāf family passed through Yathrib and saw some children playing archery and noticed that when one of them hit the target he would proclaim

'Abd al-Muṭṭalib & 'Abdullah

with great happiness and pride 'I am the son of Hāshim, I am the son the Chief of Baṭ'hā'

When the man returned to Makka he went to Muṭṭalib (Hāshim's younger brother), who at that time was sat in a gathering at the Stone, and told him what he had seen and commented that it was not appropriate for Hāshim's son to be living in a foreign land and should be brought home to grow up with his own tribe's children. Muṭṭalib said that he would immediately go to Yathrib and bring back his nephew. The man presented his camel to Muṭṭalib who mounted it and raced to *Yathrib*. The authentic narration is that Muṭṭalib asked his brother's widow that she and her son come back with him to Makka so that the child could be brought up in the appropriate environment. Salama refused to come to Makka herself but for the sake of her child's future agreed to send him.

Muṭṭalib sat his nephew Shayba behind him on the camel and left for Makka. They arrived in Makka at noon when all the leaders of Makka were sitting in their respective courts, when they saw Muṭṭalib pass by they enquired of the boy and Muṭṭalib replied 'He is my 'Abd (slave)'. When he reached home his wife too asked about the boy and he again replied that he was his slave. This is how Shayba came to be known as 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. After washing and clothing him in new clothes Muṭṭalib revealed to the people that the boy was in fact his elder brother's son Shayba but the name 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib had by then become so common that he was to be called by it for the rest of his life. No one paid any heed to his actual name Shayba.

When 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib came of age and was able to attend to his own matters his benevolent uncle gave him his father's inheritance. Many years previously the Banu Khazaa'a had expelled the Banu Jarham tribe from Makka. Before leaving the Banu Jarham had thrown their two golden pendants, swords, armour and other valuable items into the *zamzam* well in the *ka'ba* and filled it with sand so that the Banu Khazaa'a and other tribes could not benefit from them. For this reason the *zamzam* remained blocked for centuries such that the people had actually forgotten about the well

and its significance was lost. The people would fulfil their needs from the other wells of Makkah instead.

Imām Abu'l Qāsim as-Suhayli in his book '*al-Rawḍ al-Unḡ*' writes: 'because of the evil of the Bannu Jarham the water of *zanzam* had dried up and Allāh deprived them of this blessing.'

One day 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was sleeping in the *ḥaṭīm* of the Ka'ba when in a dream he was told by a man 'Dig the *ṭayba* (pure)'. He asked 'What is the *ṭayba*' but the man disappeared. The next night whilst sleeping in his bed the same man appeared in his dream and ordered 'Dig the *barra*'. He asked 'What is the *barra*' but the man disappeared. The third night again in his dream he was ordered 'Dig the *Maḏnūna*'. He asked 'What is the *Maḏnūna*' but the man disappeared. When he lay down on the fourth night he again was commanded 'Dig the *zanzam*'. He asked 'What is the *zanzam*' and this time the man explained:

'*Zanzam* is the inheritance of your great father, it will never dry nor will it need repairing. The pilgrims are quenched by it, it is between the manure and blood where the black crow pecks its beak, very next to the ants colony.'

After learning these details he went the very next day with his son Haarith (who was his only son at that time) with a spade and began digging between the *Asāf* and *Nā'ila*, where the idolators would slaughter their animals for their idols and where a black crow was pecking its beak. When they reached a point when hopes of success became apparent 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib exclaimed 'Allāh u Akbar'. At first the Quraysh had thought 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's digging was spurious and a waste of time but when they realised they were actually close to success they asserted their claim that the *zanzam* well belonged to all of their fathers and they too should be allowed to dig. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib flatly refused saying that it was Allāh's specific reward for him and he would not allow anyone else to share in it. The other tribesman threatened to stop him digging. When the dispute escalated it was decided that a third party should arbitrate and all would accept that decision. This was the only way to prevent war

and bloodshed and a soothsayer of Bannu Sa'ad bin Hazeem was chosen and all parties with their supporters headed towards to her. The Bannu Sa'ad tribe lived close to the Syrian frontier, the path to which was very desolate and required the crossing of waterless and grassless deserts. During the journey 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's stock of water ran out. He asked his opponent for water but he refused him. Their situation became very dire and they began to see inevitable death. After discussing with his companions 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib agreed that they should all dig their own graves and when one of them died the others would bury him in his hole. This way only the last of them would remain unburied, and all the others would be buried and shrouded properly. After each one had prepared his own grave they all sat down and awaited their death. After a while 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib said 'It is not gallant to just sit on our hands and await death, get up, as long as we have enough strength we will keep moving for, it is possible that Allāh will provide us with a source of salvation. They all got up and loaded their saddles upon their camels. When 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib raised his camel a spring burst out from under it's foot. It's water was both cold and sweet and all of them quenched themselves and filled up their water pouches. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib then told his companions to invite the other group to come and drink and fill up with water. Some of his companions resented this claiming that when they had asked for water they refused and now they were offering them water?! 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib explained 'If we do that then what is the difference between them and us?' 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib invited his opponents to come and quench their thirsts. When his opponents saw this miracle they conceded to 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib that there was no need to carry on ahead for Allāh had surely decided between them by producing a spring in this barren desert from the kick of his camel. 'Zanzam is exclusively yours and we take back our claim for a share' they said. Consequently both groups headed back home. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib completed the digging and recovered two golden pendants, valuable swords and armour. The people then demanded a share of those and when 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib refused the matter again became very serious. 'Abd al-

Muṭṭalib suggested that they draw lots, two lots were allocated for the Ka'ba, two for himself and two for the people. When the lots were drawn the Ka'ba's two lots drew the two pendants, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's lots drew the swords and armour whilst the people's lots drew blanks. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib had the pendants melted down and turned into plates and placed upon the door of the Ka'ba.

Sayyiduna 'Abdullāh

There is no more fortunate or prosperous father in this world than him. He is the father of the one who is the reason for the creation of the world, the intercessor of all the sinners of the nations of all the prophets, who all benefitted from his benevolence, and the all-illuminating sun in the universe of Prophethood and messengership. After whose dawn the light of guidance spread so far and deep that it left no need for another light of guidance after him. Whose round the clock effort reconnected man's broken relationships with his Lord. He who lit the candle of Allāh's love in people's hearts with his heart-stealing manners and heart-endearing sweet words. The name of the father of this unmatched and unique character is 'Abdullāh.

'Abdullāh was 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's youngest and most dearest son. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib had promised that if Allāh gave him ten sons and all of them survived to become strong young men and his power base he would sacrifice one of them for his Lord. When his youngest son 'Abdullāh reached eighteen years 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib resolved that the time had come to fulfil his promise. He summoned all his sons and told them that it was time to fulfil the promise he had made. All his sons showed great humility by bowing their heads and respectfully pleading 'O Father, fulfil your promise, whoever you choose from us will see it as an honour and will happily present his head'. They decided that the Fāl (foreteller) of the Ka'ba would draw lots and whoever's name was chosen would be sacrificed in the path of God. All of them gathered in the Ka'ba and called the soothsayer and explained the situation to him. He brought out his arrows for

'Abd al-Muṭṭalib ۞ 'Abdullāh

the draw and began preparing. One child's name was certain to be drawn, all of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's children were extremely beautiful in both appearance and character and across one of their necks the knife was surely to pass but 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was as solid as a rock. There was not even the slightest weakness in his resolve. He was determined to fulfil the promise he had made to his Lord at all costs. He was so resolute that he was actually chanting the battle cry:

*I have promised my Lord and I will fulfil my promise
By Allah nothing is praised like He is praised
As He is my Lord and I am His slave
I have taken an oath and I like not to renege on it
I would have no wish to live after doing that!*

The Fāl drew the arrows and 'Abdullāh's name was chosen. It was true that 'Abdullāh was very beautiful and was the old father's youngest and most favourite son but this was a matter between 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and his Lord! Not even the most beloved of beloved things could come between this relationship for if his creator had chosen 'Abdullāh for sacrifice then 'Abdullāh will most certainly be sacrificed for His pleasure. The knife was brought forward and 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib had already rolled up his sleeves to sacrifice 'Abdullāh himself but the news of this impending sacrifice spread like wildfire through every house in Makkah. The chiefs of the Quraysh on hearing this left their courts and ran to the Ka'ba. Everyone in Makkah was in a state of shock. The chiefs of the Quraysh ordered 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib 'This cannot happen, how could they allow 'Abdullāh, whose face is more enchanting than the full moon and whose body more tender than a flower, be sacrificed before their very eyes! They would not allow it'. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib refused claiming it was a matter between him and his Lord and they had no right to interfere. On seeing the determination of the elderly father the chiefs began to beg and plead with him that if someone like him began this tradition of slaughtering sons then who would be able to stop it! They asked him to take pity on the youth of his nation for the consequences

of his action would be very frightening. After much wrangling it was determined that they would go to the soothsayer of Hijaz and whatever she decided all would accept. Consequently when they all reached Yathrib they found that she lived in Khaybar. They went there and informed her of their purpose and she told them to give her some time as she needed to consult with her follower. The next day they went to her again and she explained that her follower had come and she asked him and he had given her the solution, but first she asked them about the compensation for a life in their country. They explained it was ten camels. She told them to go back to their country and place ten camels on one side and 'Abdullāh on the other side and then draw lots. If the camel's lot is drawn slaughter them but if 'Abdullāh's lot is drawn add ten more camels and keep drawing lots until the camels are drawn. Then slaughter however many camels you have on that side and your promise will be fulfilled.

After hearing the decision of the soothsayer the people returned to Makkah and began drawing lots. With ten camels 'Abdullāh's lot was drawn, and with each further ten camels 'Abdullāh was still drawn and only when there were a hundred camels on that side was the camel's lot drawn. When 'Abd al-Muttalib was told of this he ordered that the lots be drawn thrice for he would only accept it if the camels were drawn thrice consecutively. It was humanity's good fortune that the camel's lot was indeed drawn three times and thus a hundred camels were slaughtered and general permission was given to everyone to come and take the meat, no one was to be stopped, not even the carnivorous animals and birds. We cannot imagine the joy and happiness 'Abd al-Muttalib must have felt after coming through the test of fulfilling his promise and saving 'Abdullāh's life in return for a hundred camels. He then thought it was time to experience the happiness of his good fortune young son and bring home a bride who like her groom would be unrivalled in character and deed.

His well founded search fell upon Āmina, the beloved *hūr* like daughter of Wahb bin 'Abd Manāf bin Zahra, the chief of the Qurayshi Banu Zahra family. He went to Wahb's house and asked for

her hand for his most beloved son 'Abdullāh. When Wahb saw that 'Abd al-Muttalib, the chief of the Banu Hashim, had graced his house and sought his daughter for his beloved son there was no end to his joy and he accepted the Banu Hashim chief's request. 'Abdullāh was eighteen years old, in the prime of youth, the rays of piety and chastity abounded from him and his beauty and elegance was the stuff to die for. Wherever he would pass hearts would run wild in the chests and many hundreds of narcissist eyes would become restless to fall into his feet. Who knows how many people were tormented by the desire to catch even a mere glance of him? The scholars of *sira* write:

"'Abdullāh in his time faced the same trials from the women that Yūsuf faced in his time from the wife of the 'Azīz (Zulaykha)"

The commentator²⁸ of *Muwāhib al-Ludunīyya* writes:

"'Abdullāh was a shining light amongst the Quraysh and the most beautiful of them. The women of the Quraysh were captivated in his love, it was near that in his love they would lose their minds."

However the modest gazes of 'Abdullāh were always lowered, from his beautiful face the rays of modesty, shame and honesty ever beamed and continued to make him ever more attractive and charming. It felt as if the time of Yūsuf and Zulaykha had once again come around, many spinsters of Makkah lost their grip on patience and restraint on numerous occasions. Some when they could no more withstand the restlessness of desire even offered to forsake the tenderness of their youth and beauty upon the dust of his feet. Furthermore others offered 100 camels to cover the 100 that were slaughtered to save his life. But how could the face which had now become the station of the rays of the manifest light (*nūr*) raise his glances at any one of them? He knocked back every proposal in a very direct and dismissive way:

*As for this heinous act, it is better to die,
how can I do what you ask me,
the honourable always defends his honour and religion*

The ritual of the wedding took place soon after Wahb accepted 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's request for Sayyida Āmina's betrothal to 'Abdullāh.

As you are aware 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was a trader. Through his endeavours Makkān trade caravans were permitted to go back and forth to Syria, Palestine and other countries. Thus 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's caravans went to all places. Soon after his wedding 'Abdullāh went to Syria to supervise one of his fathers caravans and to complete some business. After completing his tasks he returned towards Makkā with his companions but fell ill on the way. When they passed *Yathrib*, with his health having deteriorated further, he stopped at his maternal ancestors to recover. His companions carried on without him. After remaining ill for a month he passed away. {*To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return*}.

All must have been extremely sad at his sudden death but only Sayyida Āmina can know the calamity that befall her. She wrote some verses on the death of her great husband. Read some of these in order to appreciate a small amount of the feelings of her grief stricken heart:

*The side of the Buthā' valley has put to rest Hāshim's son
In numerous veils he is wrapped, a foreigner outside Makkā*

*Death called him suddenly and he answered
Leaving none in the people like the son of Hāshim*

*In the evening whilst his companions carried his funeral
Due to their number they took it in turns*

*Even if death and its torments have taken him
He is still the most generous and merciful*

The Prophet ﷺ was still in his mothers womb when the benevolent shade of his father was lifted from over him and he became an orphan. 'Allāma Ahmad bin Zaini Dahlan in his *Sira an-Nabawiyya* writes:

'It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that when 'Abdullāh died the Angels pleaded 'O our Lord, O our Master, Your prophet has become orphaned, he has no father' Allāh replied 'I am his Guardian and Supporter' in another narration it is 'I am his Friend, his Overseer, his Helper, his Nourisher, I am his Supporter and will feed him, I am sufficient for him in every matter. So send salawat upon him and seek blessings with his name.'

He further adds to this:

'Imām Ja'far Sādiq was asked 'What was the wisdom in the Prophet ﷺ being born an orphan?' He replied 'Many. One so that no creation had any rights over him, those rights which one must fulfil after reaching maturity. His mother passed away when he was six years old. This was to show that respected is he who Allāh gives respect. His power was not from his fathers or mothers nor from wealth but his strength was from Allāh's help. Another wisdom is that when he personally endures the pains of orphanhood he will be merciful upon the poor and orphans.'

THE IMAN OF THE PROPHETS BLESSED PARENTS



The overwhelming majority of the learned scholars (*muhajiqiqin*) of the *Ahl as-Sunna wal-Jamā'a* believe that the honourable parents of the Prophet ﷺ are worthy of salvation and enjoying the cool breezes of paradise. (On reaching this position) The ulema have three paths.

First Path

The first path is that the Prophet's ﷺ parents belong to the time known as the 'Age of *fatra*'. The most recent Prophet to have been sent was Sayyiduna 'Isa ﷺ and six hundred long years had passed since then. During that time the *Injil* (Evangel) revelation had been subjected to many deliberate changes and instead of referring to Sayyiduna 'Isa ﷺ as 'Abdullah (servant of Allāh) and *Rasūlullāh* (Prophet of Allāh) much of his followers became entangled in a web of ignorance and began referring to him as *Ibnullāh* (son of Allāh). Consequently from where were the people of this age to attain the light of guidance? From whom were they to hear the word of truth? This is further exacerbated by the fact that Sayyiduna 'Isa ﷺ was sent to guide the Children Of Israel (*Banī Isrā'īl*), the inhabitants of the Hijāz deserts were never within his duty (of preaching). Neither

The Iman of his Blessed Parents

did Sayyiduna 'Isa ﷺ preach to them directly, for giving them the call of truth was not part of his remit, nor did the companions of 'Isa ﷺ take this task upon themselves. The people of this age are thus referred to in the following verse of the Quran: [And we do not punish anyone until we send a prophet (towards them)]

'Allāma 'Alī bin Burhānuddīn in his *Sira Ḥalabiyya* writes:

"Allāma ibn Hajar al-Haytami has stated that it is the clear truth, in which there is no doubt, that all of the *Ahl al-Fatra* are worthy of salvation. The *Ahl al-Fatra* are those to whom no Prophet was sent to compel them to believe in Allāh. Consequently the Arabs of the time of the *Banī Isrā'īl* prophets were the *Ahl al-Fatra* because the prophets of the *Banī Isrā'īl* were not ordered to invite the Arabs to believe in Allāh. Their domain of preaching was confined to the *Banī Isrā'īl*"²⁹

The above mentioned verse is supported by this second verse: [And your Lord does not destroy the settlements until he has sent a Prophet to their major city]

The scholars have divided the *Ahl al-Fatra* into three groups:

The first are those people who used their own intellect to conclude in the belief of *tawhid* (the oneness of God). Examples of these are Quss bin Sā'ida, Zaid bin 'Amr bin Nufayl and some of the kings of the nation of 'Tubba'.

The second group are those who ruined the way (*dīn*) of Ibrāhīm and initiated the worshipping of idols. With great endeavour they forced their people to accept the corrupt belief of *shirk* (polytheism) and introduced and enforced their own rules concerning *ḥarām* and *ḥalāl*. Examples of these people are 'Amr bin Luḥḥa al-Khuzā'i and his friends. There is no doubt that this group is of Hell.

The third are those who through a lack of information or laziness (to search out the truth) stayed aloof from any sort of belief. They did not uptake the *tawhid* (oneness) of Allāh but were also not party to any *shirk* or idol worshipping. This is the group that will

not be punished and is referred to in the verse: {And we do not punish anyone until we send a prophet (towards them)}

One view about the Parents of the Prophet ﷺ is that they belonged to the *Ahl al-Fatra*. No prophet in the time between Sayyiduna Isma'īl ﷺ and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came to them and no prophet's invitation reached them. They did not commit a *kufir* (disbelief) against a prophet and nor did they reject any invitation. Therefore they are worthy of salvation.

Second Path

The second path adopted by the rightful ulema is that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ remained untouched by the smears of *shirk* (polytheism) and *kufir* (disbelief). Throughout their lives they remained steadfast upon the way (*dīn*) of their forefather Sayyiduna Ibrahim firmly believing in the Oneness of Allāh and the day of reckoning (*qiyāma*) and personified the most noble of characteristics. This is the view of Imām Fakhrud-dīn Rāzī. He writes:

'Surely the parents of prophets cannot be disbelievers because of Allāh's statement 'He watches you stand and when you passed through the forehead of those who prostrate'. This means that the Prophet's light (*nūr*) passed from the forehead of a prostrator (*sājida*) to the forehead of another prostrator (*sājida*). This proves that all the forefathers of the Prophet ﷺ were Muslim.'³⁰

'Allāma Jalāl ud-Dīn Suyūṭī in his *Masālik al-Hunafā* writes:

'This reasoning is based on two premises (*muqaddimas*), the first is that it is known from sound narrations (*ṣāhiḥ ḥadīth*) that all the forefathers of the Prophet ﷺ, from Sayyiduna Adam ﷺ to Sayyiduna 'Abdullāh, were better and greater (*afḍal*) than their respective contemporaries. At the same time and consequently none from amongst their contemporaries was better or *afḍal* than them.

The second premise is that it is proven from both *ḥadīth* and *āḥād* that from Sayyiduna Adam ﷺ to the time of the Prophet ﷺ there was never a moment when there not people on the earth upon the way (*dīn*) of natural disposition (*fīra*) who only worshipped Allāh and supplicated to him. It was because of their blessing (*baraka*) that the Earth was protected, had it not been for them the Earth and everything in it would have been destroyed. Now if we were concede that any of the Prophet's ﷺ forefathers were embroiled in *shirk* (polytheism) and *kufir* (disbelief) we would have to reconcile this with them being better than all their contemporaries (some of whom had to be believers). We would thus have to consider a *kāfir* (disbeliever) and *mushrik* (polytheist) better than a believer, which is wholly unacceptable.

Furthermore it would also not be correct to assume that the forefathers of the Prophet ﷺ had contemporaries better than them as this would contradict what is established from sound narrations.

We thus have no other option but to accept that all the forefathers of the Prophet ﷺ were believers and better and of a higher rank than their contemporaries.'

We now present those sound *ḥadīth* which establish the first premise that the Prophet's ﷺ forefathers were better than all their contemporaries.

Abu Nu'aym in *Dalā'il un-Nubuwwa* with several chains narrates from Sayyiduna Ibn 'Abbās that the Prophet ﷺ said:

'Allāh constantly passed me from clean shoulders into pure wombs and kept me free from pollution and contamination. When two branches (of a family) split Allāh passed me into the better of the two.'

Imām Tirmidhī, in his *Sunan*, and Imām Bayhaqī narrate from Sayyiduna 'Abbās that the Prophet ﷺ said:

When Allāh created me He made me from the best of the creation and when He created tribes He made me from the best tribe and when He created people He made me from the best people and when He created families He made me from the best family so I am better than them in family and person.

Tabarāni in his *Awsat* and Bayhaqi in his *Dalā'il* narrate from Sayyida 'Ā'isha who narrated that the Prophet ﷺ stated:

'Ibrīl said to me 'I sifted through both the east and the west and did not find anyone better than Muḥammad and did not find a family better than the Banu Hāshim.'

After mentioning these narrations Imām as-Suyūṭī then quotes the statement of Hāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar:

'Everyone knows that someone must be better than another and that Allāh cannot choose and give the greatest rank to someone who is a *mushrik* (polytheist)'⁵¹

These narrations have proven the first premise: the Prophet's ﷺ forefathers were better and greater than their contemporaries and such a status could only have been acquired by having the belief in the *tawḥīd* (oneness) of Allāh and their belief (*'aqīda*) not being contaminated with *shirk* (polytheism).

Now view some of the narrations relating to the second premise: 'Abd ur-Razzāq in his *Musannaf* narrates from Mā'mar, who relates from Ibn Jurayj, who related from Ibn Musayyib that 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib said:

'There was never a time when there were not at least seven muslims on the earth. If these seven had not been on the earth, the earth and everything on it would have been destroyed.'

'Abd ur-Razzāq states its chain is *sahīḥ* and upon the conditions of Bukhārī & Muslim. This matter is such that the narrator would never have mentioned it had he not heard it from the tongue of the

Prophet ﷺ. Thus it is denoted as a raised chain report (*mafḥū'*) i.e. Sayyiduna 'Alī Murtada heard it from the Prophet ﷺ.

Ibn Mundhir in his *Tafsīr of Rabī' alancee mugee masalati wa min zurriyyatee* narrates from Ibn Jurayj with a sound (*sahīḥ*) chain:

'There will always be descendants of Sayyiduna Ibrāhīm عليه السلام on the way (*dīn*) of *fitra* and worshipping only Allāh.'

A verse of the Quran also confirms this:

{And remember when Ibrāhīm said to his father and nation 'I am free from those whom you worship, apart from that entity who created, so He will guide me' and He (Allāh) has made this world eternal within your offspring}

Sayyiduna Ibn 'Abbās' explanation of this verse is:

'The statement (*kalīma*) 'There is no God but Allāh (*lā ilāha illallāh*)' will remain within the descendants of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام'

Allāma Shahraṣṭāni in *al-Milal wa al-Nihal* writes:

'The way (*dīn*) of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام remained established and *tawḥīd* (oneness of God) continued illuminating the hearts of the Arabs. The first person to change the way (*dīn*) of Ibrāhīm and begin worshipping idols was 'Amr bin Luḥḥa al-Khuzā'i.'

According to the people of research all the forefathers (of the Prophet) from Sayyiduna Ibrāhīm to Ka'ab bin Lu'ay were on the way (*dīn*) of Ibrāhīm. Ka'ab's son Murra was also on this way (*dīn*) because his father bequeathed (advised) him to remain steadfast on the way (*dīn*) of Ibrāhīm. Between Murra and 'Abd al-Muttalib were four generations: Kilāb, Qusay, 'Abd Manāf and Hāshim. You have already read (in volume 1 of *Dīā ur-Nabī*) about certain instances from the lives of these people which reveal their belief (*'aqīda*) of *tawḥīd* (oneness of God).

With regards to Sayyiduna 'Abd al-Muttalib, the account of Allāma Shahraṣṭāni is sufficient. He, in his famous *al-Milal wa ar-Nihal*, writes:

'The light (*nūr*) of the Prophet ﷺ sparked in the face (*asa'ir* li: the forehead) of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. It was with the blessing (*baraka*) of this light (*nūr*) that he was inspired not to sacrifice Sayyiduna 'Abdullāh and instead fulfill the oath (*nadh'r*). It was with the blessing (*baraka*) of this light (*nūr*) that he ordered his sons to refrain from evil and arrogance and kept counselling them to adopt noble characteristics and constantly stopped them from vulgar and wicked acts. It was also the blessing (*baraka*) of this *nūr* that he had the courage to stand up to Abraha and proclaim that the House too has an Owner who is fully versed in how to protect it.'

Furthermore during the battle of *Hunayn* when the enemy unexpectedly showered the muslims with arrows, and panic temporarily set into the Islamic army and it began to retreat the Prophet ﷺ rode forward through the barrage of arrows on his mule and proclaimed the battlecry (*rajz*):

'I am the Prophet, that is no lie. I am the son of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib'

If 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib had not have been a believer in *tawhīd* (*muwāhhid*) the Prophet ﷺ would not have mentioned his lineage with such pride, for having pride on a disbelieving lineage is forbidden.

The hadith in which the Prophet's parents are referred to as polytheist and punishable are weak (*da'if*). If any one of these hadith is not weak (*da'if*) then at best it is single narration (*khabr wāhid*) and a single narration (*khabr wāhid*) cannot overrule a quranic verse (*And we do not punish anyone until we send a prophet towards them*)

About the hadith which Hākīm declared sound (*sahīh*) in *Mustadrak*, 'Uqba states:

'By God, no, it is not sound (*sahīh*), (for) Dāruqutnī declared Uthmān bin 'Umair weak (*da'if*)'

Hāfiẓ Dhahabī took a legal (*shar'ī*) oath and declared this hadith weak (*da'if*). After this research Imām Suyūṭī states:

'When, on this matter, there are only weak (*da'if*) hadith it is impossible to contemplate opposing this view.'⁷²

Third Path

The third path adopted by the ulema on this matter can be summarised in the words of Imām Suyūṭī:

'Verily Allāh brought the parents of the Prophet ﷺ back to life and they declared belief (*imān*) upon him. This is the opinion of a great number of hadith masters (*huffāz* and *muhadithīn*), some of whom are Ibn Shāhin; Hāfiẓ Abū Bakr al-Khatīb al-Baghādādī, Abū 'l Qāsim as-Suhaylī, Abū 'Abdullāh al-Qurtubī, Muḥibb Tabarī, 'Allāma Nāsīruddīn Ibn Al Munir and others'

Here the outstanding contemporary research scholar (*muhāqqiq*) Imām Muḥammad Abū Zahra has fulfilled the duty of research. I present an extract from his book *Khātim un-Nabiyīn*, the reading of which I am sure will cool your eyes and bring joy to your heart:

'There is no doubt that the report (*khabr*) in which the Prophet's ﷺ father is in the fire is strange or odd (*gharīb*) in terms of meaning and comprehension (*ma'nā*) just as it is strange in terms of narration (*sana'd*). For Allāh has stated (*And we do not punish anyone until we send a prophet towards them*) and the Prophet's ﷺ parents were from the time of *fatra* so how could they be punished. This (would be) totally against the fundamentals of the religion. His father passed away before the Prophet's ﷺ birth and his mother passed away whilst the Prophet ﷺ was still young and his prophethood had not been announced. Thus the report in which it is stated that she is in the fire is rejected because firstly it is strange (*gharīb*) in terms of narration (*sana'd*) and secondly its meaning is very far from the truth.'

The writer then describes his emotions on hearing such things:

'In truth, when I even contemplate the notion that Sayyiduna 'Abdullāh and Sayyida 'Āmina are in the fire it is as if my ears and

THE BIRTH OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

mind are being struck with a hammer. Sayyiduna 'Abdullāh was that young man whose trait was restraint, who in accordance with his father's oath (*nadh'r*) was ready to be sacrificed; he willingly stepped forward and offered his head. And then when the Quraysh asked for 100 camels in compensation he readily accepted. He, despite his boundless beauty, always remained distant from amusements and folly and when a woman invited him to sin he immediately responded 'You invite me to sin, to die is better (than that)!' Why would such a pure and sincere young man be thrown into the fire when no prophet had ever preached to him!'

'And the Prophet's ﷺ mother, who showed great patience in the terrible grief of her husband's death so soon after her marriage, who finding her child orphaned and destitute did not wail or weep but adopted patience as a trait. Can anyone even contemplate such a *hūr*-like virtuous lady being thrown into Hell, even though no prophet of Allāh came to guide her and nobody invited her towards *tawhid* (oneness of God)?'

'The conclusion we reach after consulting all the hadith on this matter is that the parents of the Prophet ﷺ were from the time (that was) that was cut off from the preaching of the prophets and both were very close to the guidance and virtues which their son (later) preached. After careful study of Qurānic verses and sound hadith it is our firm belief (*aqīda*) that it is not possible for them to be sent to Hell. His mother was the personification of patience, she was so affectionate with her charming son, how possibly could the fire touch her? There is no single shred of evidence which shows her worthy of being burnt in Hell. Rather there is evidence which testifies that she and her husband - who was known by the titles of *dhabih* (sacrificed) and *tāhir* (pure) - should be endlessly showered with flowers of acclamation and praise.'

Imām Muḥammad Abū Zahra ends his well reasoned discussion with these words:

The Iman of his Blessed Parents

'We have not reached this conclusion solely because we have the love of the Prophet ﷺ in our heart - although our love would demand us to reach this conclusion and we hope that Allāh keeps our hearts overflowing with the love of the Prophet ﷺ - we have reached our conclusion (because of) the laws of reason; logic, nature and the strong proofs of Shariah. The purpose and objectives of Sharā'a force us to reach this conclusion.'

I wish to finish on the *fatwa* (legal edict) of Qādi Abū Bakr Ibn 'Arabi, the great Imām of the Mālikī School whose *Tafsīr: Ahkām ul-Qurān* is the greatest shining testimony to his knowledge and wisdom.

Qādi Abū Bakr Ibn 'Arabi was asked his opinion about the man who claimed that the Prophet's ﷺ parents were in the Fire (Hell). He replied:

'He is cursed. For verily Allāh has proclaimed that those who harm Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ are cursed by Allāh in this and the next world and there is no greater injury to the Prophet ﷺ than to claim such a thing about his parents.'

ENDNOTES

- 1 Ibn Jawzī, *Al Wafā*, (1:88).
- 2 A semi-circular wall on the southwest side of the Ka'ba.
- 3 Prior to the migration of the Prophet ﷺ, Madīna was called *Yathrib*.
- 4 Aḥmad bin Zaynī Dhahlān, *Sira al-Nabawīyya* (1:48).
- 5 *Ibid*.
- 6 Ibn Jarīr at-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh at-Ṭabarī* (2:125).
- 7 Ibn Khuldūn, *Tārīkh Ibn Khuldūn* (2:710).
- 8 Ibn Hishām, *as-Sīrah an-Nabawīyya* (1:171)
- 9 Al-Māwardī, *Ṭīām un-Nabuwwa* (p192)
- 10 Muḥammad as-Sādiq Ibrahim 'Arjūn, *Muḥammad Rasūlullāh* (1:102)
- 11 Muḥammad Riḍā, *Muḥammad Rasūlullāh* (2:19)
- 12 Ibn Jawzī, *Al Wafā*, (1:90).
- 13 Ibn Sayyid an-Nās, *Uyūn al-Athar* (1:26)
- 14 Ibn Kathīr, *as-Sīrah an-Nabawīyya* (1:199)
- 15 Nawāb Muḥammad Šiddīq Ḥasan Khān, *as-Shamānat Ambarīyya Mawliḍ Khayr al-Bariyya* (p7)
- 16 Muftī Muḥammad Shafī, *Sīrah Khāṭam al-Anbiyā* (p18)
- 17 Justice Shaykh Muḥammad Karam Shāh al-Azharī, *Tafsīr Dīā al-Qurān* (1:202)
- 18 Muḥammad Abū Zahra, *Khāṭam un-Nabiyyīn* (1:115)
- 19 Nūr ad-Dīn 'Alī bin Ibrahim al-Ḥalabī, *as-Sīrah al-Ḥalabīyya* (1:59-60)
- 20 Abū al-Qāsim as-Suhaylī, *ar-Rawḍ al-Uhuf* (1:184)
- 21 Muḥammad as-Sādiq Ibrahim 'Arjūn, *Muḥammad Rasūlullāh* (1:102)
- 22 Nūr ad-Dīn 'Alī bin Ibrahim al-Ḥalabī, *as-Sīrah al-Ḥalabīyya* (1:80)
- 23 Al-Nawawī: *Tahdhīb al-Asmā wal-Lughāt* (p22)
- 24 Al-Nawawī: *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (1:285)
- 25 Al-Nawawī: *Tahdhīb al-Asmā wal-Lughāt* (p22)
- 26 Aḥmad ibn Zaynī Dahlān, *Sira an-Nabawīyya* (1:4748)
- 27 The '*aqīqā*' is the name given to the animal sacrifice done for a new born child on the seventh day after being born.
- 28 Imām 'Abd al-Bāqī Zurqānī.
- 29 Nūr ad-Dīn 'Alī bin Ibrahim al-Ḥalabī, *as-Sīrah al-Ḥalabīyya* (1: p103).
- 30 *Ibid*.
- 31 Aṣ-Suyūṭī, *Masālik al-Hunafā* (p22)
- 32 Aṣ-Suyūṭī, *Masālik al-Hunafā* (p47)

APPENDIX I
SURAH AL-FIL

The details of the incident of the elephant need to be understood carefully for that is the only way one can understand the purpose of this chapter.

The people of Abyssinia were in fact descendants of Yemen. Yemen and Abyssinia were only separated by the Red Sea and the Yemenis moved to the Abyssinian coast to set up trading centres. Over time they married with the natives and gradually lost their Yemeni identity. Thus they were neither pure Yemeni nor pure African. The word Habash literally means mixture (*kitlat/imitzāj*).

As a result there became two parts to the Sabah nation: one in Yemen and one in Abyssinia. Those in Yemen worshipped the stars whilst Abyssinia fell under the control of the Roman Empire. Through the emperor's patronage Christianity spread within the Roman Empire and most of the Habsha became Christian. Overtime, through preaching, parts of Yemen also began to convert to Christianity.

However the Yemeni ruler Dhu Nawās tried to crush Christianity in Yemen and began burning Christians¹. One of the Christians, Amīr Dos bin Thawbān, fled this persecution and sought refuge in the court of Negus, the Abyssinian Emperor. In one narration it is that these people actually went to the court of Caesar himself and it was he who instructed Negus to take action.

Caesar sent ships² and some historians believe religion was an excuse and that Caesar was actually looking for an excuse to take control of Yemen, which was a major trade port to where Eastern goods arrived and were taken to the west. The Arabs currently controlled this trade and took the goods to Syria on camels through the desert³. The Romans wanted this trade. Furthermore because of wars between Rome and Persia this route had strategic significance.

After a number of attempts the Habashi army finally took control of Yemen in 525CE and some twenty years later the army general Abraha led a revolt and took over in around 543CE.⁴

When Najāshi heard of Abraha's revolt he was infuriated and swore to grind the dust of Yemen under his feet and spill the blood of Abraha. Abraha apologised humbly and Najāshi accepted and made him governor of Yemen.

Abraha began to energetically propagate Christianity and built many great Churches and Cathedrals. In the capital Sana he had built a very large church called 'Al-Qalis' or 'Al-Qulays'.⁵ A great deal of wealth was spent on it. However despite his best efforts Christianity did not spread much. The main reason for this was the respect the Arabs still had for the Ka'ba which was built at the hands of their forefathers Ibrāhīm and Isma'īl. To accept Christianity would mean turning their back on the Ka'ba.

Abraha sent envoys to all the Arabs urging them to leave the dark stoned Ka'ba in the middle of nowhere and come to his architectural marvel in the beautiful gardens of Sana. But the Arabs ignored him and continued their pilgrimages to the Ka'ba. Abraha thus decided that the Ka'ba had to be destroyed.

At this same time another event took place which added flames to the fire⁶ already raging in Abraha and hastened his attack. There are three different accounts of what happened:

- A man from the Banu Kināna tribe defecated the Church 'Al-Qalis'⁶
- Some Arab youth tried to burn down the Church
- A group of travellers set up camp near the Church and a

spark from their cooking fire was blown by the wind into the Church, setting fire to it.

A few days after this the army headed for Makka, led by Abraha himself⁷. The news of this impending invasion spread like wildfire amongst the Arabs and many tribes came out to stop the army in its tracks, even the Yemeni tribes. However all of them were crushed⁸. After defeating each Arab army Abraha captured their leaders and took them along with him. However when they reached Tā'if, instead of encountering resistance the people surrendered and welcomed Abraha and even offered a man, Abu Rigāl⁹, to show Abraha the way to the Ka'ba. The people of Tā'if did so to protect their own temple¹⁰.

On reaching the outskirts of Makka Abraha set up camp in the Magmus valley. As usual, the army started looting and destroying what it could find. During this they took 200 camels belonging to 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib.

Abraha sent a man, Hināta, to Makka with a message 'I have not come to attack you, I only want to destroy the Ka'ba. If you do not stand against me I will not harm you but if you oppose me then only you will be responsible for your fate.' Hināta brought this message to Makka and sought out their chief. The people told him it was 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Hināta gave 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib Abraha's message. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib calmly replied 'We have no intention of fighting Abraha nor are we able to! This is the house of Allah, the haram of His Khalil. If He wishes, He will defend it Himself.' Hināta asked 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib to come with him to Abraha. So he did.

On seeing the stature and appearance of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib Abraha was in awe, he come off his throne and sat next to 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib on the floor¹¹. He asked through a translator 'Have you anything to say?' 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib replied 'My only request is that your army has taken 200 of my camels and they should be returned' Abraha was perplexed by this unexpected reply and commented 'When I first saw you a great deal of respect grew in my heart for

you but after listening to your petty request this respect has been extinguished. You are concerned for your camels but not for the Ka'ba which is the basis of your honour and prestige?' 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib replied 'I am the lord of the camels and there is a Lord of the House who will protect it.' Abraha became angry and arrogantly proclaimed 'Nothing can protect it from me'¹²

'Abd al-Muṭṭalib returned to Makka and advised everyone to leave the city and head for the Mountains. He then took the clan leaders to the Ka'ba and supplicated by grabbing the metal ring of the Ka'ba doors and saying:

*'Everyone protects his house, so You protect Your own
But their Cross and power shall not overcome Your power
But if you wish to leave them and our Qibla that is Your decision'*

Ibn Jarīr also narrates that the following words were also pleaded by 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib:

*O Lord, Save You I turn to no one against them
O Lord protect your Haram from their attack
This House's enemy is surely Your enemy,
Stop them, they wish to destroy Your city'*

After finishing their supplication they went to the Mountains¹³. Abraha decided to attack in the morning. He had nine or eleven elephants and the largest of them was called 'Mahmūd'. When it was ordered to march towards Makka it sat down on the ground. The elephant driver tried his best to get him up but he couldn't. However when they ordered him to march in another direction it immediately got up¹⁴.

At that time circles of small birds appeared in the sky¹⁵, each had a stone in its beak and one in each of its two feet. The stone was the size of a chick pea. Each bird dropped one stone on one soldier and much of the army was destroyed on the spot. Abraha and a small group escaped but with a severe rash on their bodies which turned into scabs with their constant scratching. Peep and

blood began to flow from the scabs and their skin began falling off. Many of the escapees died on the path. Abraha managed to reach back to Sana but his whole body was scabby and he was very thin and looked like a thin plucked chicken. He died in severe pain.¹⁶

The enemy which had great pride in its power and size was destroyed by the bombardment of very small birds. To destroy such a powerful army Allāh did not need to use any supernatural power, of all his countless armies he sent a few legions of his smallest of small birds. Had Allāh desired He could have stopped them from the outset through the army of the Arab chief Dhu an-Nafī but His wisdom lay in something else.

One of the effects of this episode was that it destroyed the hopes the Arabs had on their idols and they all fall in Allāh's court. It is said that for seven years they only worshipped Allāh.

VERSE 1

أَمْ حَرَكَيْتُمْ أَفْعَالَكُمْ
أَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتُ الْأُولَىٰ

{Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the people
of the Elephant?}

This *sūrah* is asking the Arabs 'How are you rejecting my Prophet's invitation and are not prepared to reject your idols? Have you forgotten the year of the elephant? Who saved you from the mighty army?'

Ibn Abbās and other scholars of research state that this event happened 50 days before the birth of the Prophet ﷺ, on 17 *Muharram*. The Prophet himself said 'I was born in the year of the elephant.'

The scholar Abu Nu'aim states that the attackers were Christian whilst the people of Makka were idol worshippers who had placed 360 idols in the Ka'ba. Thus Allāh should have supported the Christian Abraha against the polytheists (*mushrikīn*) and punished those who had turned the Ka'ba into an idol temple. But He didn't. There are many reasons for this. The time had come close for the true purifier of the Ka'ba to arrive¹⁷.

In addition although Abraha was a Christian they had started to believe that Isa was the son of god and thus there was very little

difference between them and the polytheists of Makka. The question 'Have you not seen how...' is not for information but for amazement.

Also note it is not asking what Allāh *did* to the people of the elephant but *how* He did it. The event took place in such a way that each part of this episode amazes the human. The details of these events bear witness to Allāh's complete and all encompassing power and the honour and sanctity of the Ka'ba.

Abraha's army had 60,000 warriors and 9 or 11 elephants. The Arabs and people of Makka had never seen an army of this size or this type of weaponry. The elephant was a new thing for the Arabs and thus the whole army become known by them. Although they had more than one elephant they have been described as the people of a singular elephant.

Some honourable Arabs did try and confront Abraha before he could reach Makka but they were not successful. The people of Makka sought refuge in the mountains and there seemed to be nothing that could stop the destruction of the Ka'ba. It was in these conditions that Allāh saved His own house and certified the sanctity and honour of His Prophet's ﷺ first place of preaching.

This episode compels the human to conclude that whosoever's house this is his power must be boundless, his wisdom and his planning unrivalled. Whatever matter he intends he completes and no one can stop him.

VERSE 2

أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضَلُّلٍ

{Did he not make their plan disgraced?}

Kaid (كَيْدٌ) according to Ibn Mandhūr, in Lisān al-'Arab, denotes a plan, whether it is good or evil. This should not be translated as a secret or hidden plan because Abraha's army and its purpose was not hidden from anyone, indeed he had forcibly announced it. *Tadhīl* (تَضَلُّلٌ) denotes a plan or scheme that fails.

Abraha had made a firm intention to carry out his plan and to fulfil it he had made comprehensive preparations. The population

of Makkah was only a few thousand which included the elderly, children and women. Bringing such a large army to this city shows that Abrahah wanted to make sure he fulfilled his plan. 'He wanted to extinguish every possibility of failure' and 'He wanted to fulfil his plan whatever the cost.'

VERSE 3 & 4

وَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ۝ تَرْمِثُ بِحِجَابٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ

{And he sent upon them legions of birds.

Who threw stones of Sijjil}

The birds had been sent armed with weapons from the divine armoury. They had very small stones which had been baked in the fire of Hell and were the size of a chick pea¹⁸. Their power can be ascertained from the fact that each bird was only allowed to drop three of these 'bombs'. The small bombs pierced through the iron armour wounded and cut through their bodies, then pierced through their animals and sank into the ground. There was no possibility of them missing their targets. Wherever the stones touched the bodies showed up spots with peep and blood flowing from them. Over time their flesh started to melt away.

This bombardment brought chaos into the ranks of the army who forgot their military formations and discipline. They all tried to escape to wherever they could but most of them died on the spot. Some did however escape and managed to reach Sana. The wisdom in letting some of them escape to Sana could be that, not just the people of Makkah, but the people of Sana too should see with their own eyes how divine wrath destroys the arrogant.

VERSE 5

جَاءَهُمْ كَذِئِبٍ مَّا تَلَّوْا

{And He made them like ravaged leaves}

How aptly this describes their degradation and destruction. *كذِئِبٍ* 'asf' refers to the wheat leaves etc whilst *ما تَلَّوْا* refers to that which has been eaten or ravaged by animals. When an animal eats it first tears the food into pieces with its teeth and then the swallowed leaves sit in the gut and then exit it through its excrement. Think for yourself how degraded that leaf becomes! This was the state of these people.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Ibn Kathir: Dhu Nawās killed 20,000 Christians
- 2 Ibn Kathir: Negus sent an army led by Arbā and Abraha
- 3 See *tafsīr* of *Sūrah Quraysh* about the importance of this trade route controlled by the Quraysh.
- 4 Ibn Kathir: Arbā and Abraha ruled jointly until they fall out and rather than have the two armies square up to each other they agreed to a one on one battle, which Abraha survived.
- 5 Ibn Kathir: the church was so tall that the hat of whoever tried to look at the top of it fall off and so the Arabs called it 'Al-Qaṭis'
- 6 *Tafsīr Jalālayn*: A man from the Banu Kinaana in protest stained his prayer niche with a virgin's blood.
- 7 Ibn Kathir: Najāshī had sent elephants for this attack. Abraha planned to destroy the Ka'ba by putting chains around its walls and around the necks of the elephants, who would pull and thus destroy the Ka'ba in one go. *Tafsīr Mazhari* states the Abraha actually asked Najāshī for these elephants.
- 8 Ibn Kathir: 'the All powerful had intended something else'
- 9 Mazhari: The chief of Ta'if greeted Abraha 'We are your servants, we will not oppose you, we will send a guide with you,' Abu Rigaal was a slave and died at Magmus and this is the grave that is stoned by the Arabs.
- 10 Ibn Kathir: this is where the infamous idol 'Lāt' was kept
- 11 Ibn Kathir: On seeing 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who was fair, strong, at-

- trative and beautiful, Abraha was in awe and came off his throne.
- 12 Ibn Kathir: Abraha said 'Even Allāh today cannot save it from me.'
- 13 Ibn Kathir: After performing the dua by holding onto the lock of the Ka'ba's door they left behind 100 marked camels offered to Allāh with the hope that when the immoral army attacks them it would invoke the wrath of Allāh.
- 14 Mazhari: It is narrated that Mahmood survived for he did not advance on the Ka'ba. All the other elephants were killed.
- 15 Ibn Kathir: Māqidi states the birds were yellow with red feet and were a little smaller than pigeons.
- 16 Ibn Kathir: Abraha died a dog's death.
- 17 *Tafsīr Mazhari* states that the episode of the people of the elephant was actually a tamheed for the Prophet's arrival. Ibn Kathir: Effectively it was a prelude to the Prophet's prophethood and an announcement of his arrival.
- 18 *Tafsīr Jalālayn*: each stone was inscribed with the name of Allāh.

the Quraysh and from the Quraysh he chose Hāshim and from the children of Hāshim he chose me.’

Why were they known as the Quraysh?

A number of reasons for this name have been mentioned:

1. It is based on their trading as a means of living. The word Quraysh is from the noun *taqarrush* meaning to gather and earn. The relevance of this was that the Quraysh were traders.⁶
2. They were named after a large and powerful sea animal because they possessed similar qualities.

Muāwiyā once asked ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbās the reason behind the name Quraysh. He explained: ‘It was (the name) of a big species which lived in the water, whenever it came across another large being it would eat it up but no one would eat it. It would overcome others but no one would overcome it.’⁷ In battle it would always win and never lose.’

3. It is because all the Quraysh had gathered together in Makka.

The noun *qarsh* means to join and pull together numerous dispersed pieces. The relevance with the Quraysh is that all the Quraysh had been dispersed amongst the Arabs and Qusai ibn Kilaḅ gathered them all together in Makka.⁸

4. The noun *qarrash* means to seek out and investigate. The Quraysh used to serve the pilgrims by seeking out their needs and fulfilling them.

How the Quraysh began trading

Although Qusai had gathered all the Quraysh in Makka the city was unable to support them. There was no possibility of agriculture

APPENDIX 2 SURAH AL-QURAYSH

This is a Sūrah exclusively about the Arab tribe of the Quraysh¹, the tribe to which the blessed Prophet belonged.



Its purpose is to remind the Quraysh of Allāh’s great favours upon them and in light of which they should only worship Him. Most scholars agree that this sūrah was revealed in Makka and soon after *sūrah fil*. It’s common subject and the syntax between its words also supports this view². This relationship between the two *sūrahs* is so strong that some actually believe that they are not two separate sūrahs but one³. However the manuscripts prepared by Sayyiduna ‘Uthmān have the *tasmiya* between them and are thus recognized as two separate *sūrahs*.⁴

Who were the Quraysh?

They were the descendants of Naḍr bin Kināna, and were known as Quraysh.⁵

Qurtubi narrates the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ: ‘We are the children of Kināna, we do not accuse our mothers nor do we disown our fathers’ In this statement the Prophet declares that they are proud of the purity and chastity of their mothers and the honesty and honour of their fathers.

In another hadith the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Allāh chose Kināna from the Children of Isma‘il and from the children of Kināna he chose

because there was no water and the land was not arable. The whole Makkān economy depended on the gifts and services brought by pilgrims from all over Arabia.

Consequently many families would (periodically) become so and when a family of the Quraysh became destitute it would go to a specified place, set up a tent and sit there awaiting death.

This custom continued for some time until Hāshim gathered all the people together and warned them that if this practice continued the Quraysh would dwindle away and become overwhelmed by the other tribes. This could not be allowed to happen for the Quraysh was the best tribe. He advised them to begin trade expeditions to Syria (in the summer) and Yemen (in the winter). The rich amongst the Quraysh provided for the poor so no one in the Quraysh was left poor.⁹

Virtues of the Quraysh (taken from Tafsīr Mazharī)

The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Allāh chose Kināna from the children of Ismā'il and from the children of Kināna he chose the Quraysh and from the Quraysh he chose Hāshim and from the Banī Hāshim he chose me.' (narrated from Imām Bagawī)

Abū Hurayra narrates the hadith: 'People are followers of the Quraysh; their believers and their disbelievers.' (Bukhārī & Muslim) jābir narrates the hadith: 'People follow the Quraysh in good and bad' (Muslim)

The writer of *Tafsīr Mazharī* explains these hadith by stating that most of the great companions (*sahāba*) and saints (*awliya*) are from the Quraysh. These hadith could also mean that the Quraysh were the first to accept the Prophet's message and all the others followed. Consequently the Muslim Quraysh will receive the reward of all the followers (because they showed the way) thus they have the greatest rank after the Prophets. And those Quraysh who disobeyed the Prophet ﷺ will receive the punishment of the others who subsequently rejected for they showed them the way. This principle is similar to the hadith in Bagawī which tells that

Qābil, the first murderer, will carry the sin of all murders.

The hadith narrated by Ibn 'Umar states: 'As long as there are two of the Quraysh this matter¹⁰ will remain in them' (Bukhārī & Muslim)

The hadith narrated by Muāwiyā states: 'As long as the Quraysh maintain the religion (*dīn*) this matter will remain in them and whoever has enmity against them Allāh will cause him to fall on his face.' (Bukhārī)

Tafsīr Mazharī states that these hadith relate to the caliphate of the Quraysh and enmity refers to the person who rebels against them.

It is narrated by Sa'ād: 'Allāh will humiliate whoever tries to humiliate the Quraysh' (Tirmidhī)

In a hadith narrated by Ibn 'Abbās the Prophet ﷺ said 'Allāh has given the Quraysh seven virtues: I am from them, Prophethood is within them, they are the caretakers of the Ka'ba, they give water from the *zamzam*, Allāh gave them victory over the people of the elephant, they worshipped Allāh exclusively for 10 years when no one else did, Allāh revealed a sūrah about them and he (the Prophet) recited this sūrah.' (Hākim, Tabarānī, Bukhārī in at-Tārīkh)¹¹

VERSE 1

لَا يَلْفُ قُرَيْشٍ

{Because Allāh has placed love (in the hearts)
of the Quraysh}

This verse means that because Allāh has bestowed many favours and bounties upon them they should become His grateful servants, ascribe no partners to Him and become busy in his worship. If they have forgotten all His other favours they should at least remember His favour of providing them a livelihood in a barren valley in the desolate and dry desert which has no means of supporting life. He placed in their hearts the love of trade and that in the summer and winter they are able to go to different places with no one to

stop them. Although they live in the desert they enjoy all the good things of the world; the markets of Makkah were always well stocked, even with fresh fruit. Consequently they should make the worship of the Lord of this house their trait and not even raise an eye to any other deity.

Zamakshari has said that the *lām* at the start of the verse relates (is *mutalliq*) to the verb *falya'budu* (in the third verse) and means that they should worship the Lord of this House because he has put love in their hearts, the love to journey in the winter and summer; Qurṭubi has also preferred this.¹²

VERSE 2

الْقَوْمِ رَحْمَةً الْمَشَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ

{Their love for the winter and summer journey}

As mentioned, the Quraysh were traders, in the winter they would head to the southern ports of the Arabian peninsula where they would acquire goods arriving from India and South Asia. They would take these on their camels to sell in the Roman province of Syria. In the Summer they would travel to the cooler climes of Syria and Palestine and attain the goods of the West and take to sell in Yemen¹³. There was a great desert between Syria and Yemen and only the Quraysh were acquainted with its intricacies. Only they had the courage to cross it, all trading caravans faced danger at every step but the Quraysh were secure from all attacks. No Arab would dare lift an eye towards their caravans and no one had the courage to raise a hand to them. This was also one of Allāh's great favours upon them, because of the barakah of His house He had placed love for the Quraysh in the heart of the Arabs!^{14 15}

VERSE 3

فَلْيَسْبُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ

{So they should worship the lord of this house}

As Allāh has given them such an honourable livelihood they should worship the Lord of the House¹⁶, who only a few years earlier had protected it from Abraha and given him such a punishment that no one would ever dare attack it again.¹⁷

VERSE 4

الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

{He who fed them after hunger and gave them security after fear}

Here *min* (from) actually means *badā* (after); meaning he fed them after a long period of famine¹⁸, by putting the wise idea of trade into their hearts and so making them wealthy.¹⁹

The fire of insecurity burned everywhere in the Arabian peninsula. There were lootings and killings on every route and it seemed very strange if a traveller ever returned home safe. Every tribe was in fear. However wherever the Quraysh went, because of the blessing (*baraka*) of the house, they found respect²⁰.

ENDNOTES

- 1 *Tafsir Mazhari* mentions specific virtues of this *sūrah*: al-Jawzi in *Hisn al-Hasin* narrates from Abū Ḥasan al-Qazwīnī that who ever fears an enemy etc should recite this *sūrah* and he will be in peace. The writer of *Tafsir Mazhari* also explains that his Shaykh ordered him to read this *sūrah* in every problematic and frightening situation. He did so and found his Shaykh to be correct.
 - 2 Grammatically the *majrūr lām* at the beginning of this *sūrah* could relate (*muttaliq*) to the verb of the last sentence in *sūrah al-Fil* (as explained in *Tafsir Mazhari*) whilst its message is to remind the Quraysh of His favours upon them, specifically the defeat of Abraham and the safe passage of their trading caravans. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* acknowledges that in meaning it is related to *sūrah al-Fil* and the first verse means 'We gave the Quraysh victory to increase the love of the Quraysh and to allow them to live together in Makkah.'
 - 3 *Tafsir Mazhari* states that the manuscript of 'Alī bin Ka'ab has no separation between the two *sūrahs*.
 - 4 *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*: Scholars like Ibn al-Jarir state that the *lām* is actually for '*ta'ajjub*' (amazement) and thus the two *sūrahs* are distinct as is the consensus of the *umma*. The *lām ta'ajjub* means 'be amazed by the love for the Quraysh which is a great blessing of Mine. They should thank Me for this blessing by only worshipping Me.'
 - 5 *Tafsir Mazhari*
 - 6 *Ibid*
 - 7 *Ibid*
 - 8 Also in *Tafsir Mazhari* which states that the dictionary defines *Qarsh* as to gather. It also states that Quraysh means to gather
- 9 because the Quraysh gathered goods before taking them for sale. Also in *Tafsir Mazhari*.
 - 10 This matter refers to being the leaders and the most honoured of all people
 - 11 *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* also mentions this hadith of the seven virtues exclusively for the Quraysh.
 - 12 This is also the preference of *Tafsir Jalalayn*.
 - 13 *Tafsir Jalalayn*: they would sell these goods in Makkah (presumably to the pilgrims and this accounted for why the bazars of Makkah were well stocked)
 - 14 *Tafsir Mazhari*: All around Makkah there were lootings and killings but people refrained from harming the Quraysh because they lived in the haram and were neighbours of the House of Allāh. If it wasn't for this respect the Quraysh could not have made these journeys.
 - 15 Ibn 'Abbās: This verse could also mean that belief in Allāh's divine Oneness is not hard for Quraysh just as their winter and summer trips are not hard for them.
 - 16 *Tafsir Mazhari*: Allāh has described himself as the Lord of the House to remind them that the House is the reason for their safety and honour
 - 17 *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* narrates the statement of the Prophet: 'O Quraysh, Allāh has given you such comfort and ease that he feeds you in your home whilst all around the fire of insecurity blazes. He gives you the sweet slumber of peace and security so what is your problem that you turn away from His oneness (*rawḥid*) and do not worship Him sincerely, and instead bow your heads before others'
 - 18 *Tafsir Ibn 'Abbās*: This famine lasted seven years.
 - 19 *Tafsir Jalalayn*: they suffered famine because of a lack of crops in Makkah.
 - 20 Ibn 'Abbās: this could also refer to the security given to them from Najāshī (Nagūs), linked to the previous *sūrah*, *al-Fil*.

APPENDIX 3
 THE VIEWS OF THE
 GREAT ULEMA ON THE MAWLID

Compiled by Mufti Muḥammad Khān Qādirī



THE MUḤADDITH IBN AL-JAWZI

“From the first of *Rabi’ al-Awwal* the people of the honourable Haramain; Egypt; Yemen; Syria and all the Arab cities in the East and West celebrate the gathering of the *Mawlid an-Nabi* ﷺ. The greatest events in them are the reciting and listening to the (miracles of the) *mawlid*. And through these (gatherings) they attain great reward and great success” (*Al-Mawlid an-Nabi*, p58)

IMĀM ABŪ SHĀMA, THE SHAYKH OF IMĀM NAWAWI

“Amongst the excellent new acts begun in our time in the city of Arbal is the giving of *sadaqah* and the display of splendour and happiness on the anniversary of the *Mawlid an-Nabi*. (This is an excellent act) because apart from helping the poor it also reveals the love, magnificence and respect for the Prophet ﷺ (that exists) in the hearts and is gratitude to Allāh for sending His Prophet as a Mercy for all the Worlds” (*Al Ba’ith ala Inkar al-Bida wal-Hawāthih*, p13)

IMĀM AL-HAFIZ SAKHAWI

“In all the great cities Muslims have always celebrated in the month of the *mawlid* with great gatherings and increased *sadaqa* and good

Appendix 2: The views of the Great ulema on the Mawlid

deeds in those nights. In particular the events that occurred at the time of the birth are the subject of these gatherings” (*Subul al-Huda*, 1:439)

IMĀM JALĀLUDDIN SUYŪTĪ

“I believe that the acts of the *mawlid*; the gathering of people; the recitation of the Qurān and the narration of the Prophets ﷺ sira and the signs that appeared at the time of his birth are *bida hasana* (an excellent innovation) worthy of reward for they are undertaken (an excellent innovation) worthy of reward for they are undertaken to show respect and love for the Prophet ﷺ and happiness at his birth” (*Husn al-Maqasad fi’Amal il Mawlid fil Hāwī il’l Fatāwa* 1:189)

IMĀM QASTALĀNI, THE COMMENTATOR OF BUKHĀRI

“The Muslims have always been celebrating with gatherings in *Rabi’ al-Awwal*, the month of his birth. They increase charity (*sadaqa*) and good deeds in its nights, in particular, they attain Allāh’s mercy through narrating his birth in these gatherings. The gathering of *mawlid* is proven to bring blessing (*baraka*), particularly that which ensures peace throughout the year. May Allāh shower his favour and bounty upon the one who celebrates the *mawlid* as an Eid and (in doing so brings) affliction upon the one with sickness (of opposition) in his heart” (*Al-Muwāhib al-Luduniyya* 1:27)

IBN TAŪMIYYA

“The purpose of those who celebrate the *mawlid* is either to imitate the Christians who celebrate the birth of ‘Īsa ﷺ or their purpose is solely the love and respect of the Prophet ﷺ. If it is for the latter purpose Allāh will reward them for this love and effort” (*Iqtidā Sira’ al-Mustaqim*, 294)

In another place he writes

“If the purpose of the *mawlid* gathering is the respect of the Prophet ﷺ then there is great reward for such a person as I have stated before” (There is no other reason for a person to perform *mawlid*

other than the respect and love of the Prophet ﷺ). (*Iqtidā Sirat al-Mustaqīm*, 297)

HAFIZ ABŪ ZAR'Ā AL IRAQI

"It was asked if the *mawlid* was recommended (*mustahab*) or disliked (*makrūh*) and if any sources or practices existed which could be used as guidance (in this matter). He replied 'Distributing food is recommended (*mustahab*) at all times so how (great) will it be when it is combined with the happiness of the appearance of the Prophets' ﷺ light in the month of *Rabi' al-Awwal*. We do not know if the pious predecessors (*salaf*) did this but just because we do not know does not make it a bad innovation (*bid'ā*) or disliked (*makrūh*). Indeed, there are many recommended (*mustahab*) acts which were not in the pious predecessors (*salaf*), yet some of them are obligatory (*wājib*)!" (*Tahrij al-Ādhan of Shaykh Muḥammad bin Siddiq* p136)

IMĀM IBN HAFAR MAKKI

"The gatherings of *mawlid* and *dhikr* which take place around us are largely based on good because they contain *sadaqa*, *dhikr*, *ṣalāt* and *salām* upon the Prophet ﷺ" (*Fatāwa Hādithiyya* p129)

MULLA 'ALI QARI

"All the *shuyūkh* and ulema of all countries respect the gathering of *mawlid* in a way that not one of them refuses participating in them. The reason for their participation is attainment of *baraka*" (*Al-Mawrid ar-Rawā*)

IMĀM NAṢIRUDDIN (BETTER KNOWN AS BABIN TABĀKH)

"When a man on the night of *mawlid* spends *sadaqah* and organises the remembrance of *sahih* narrations which give reminders of hereafter and all of it is done in joy of the birth of the Prophet ﷺ, there is no doubt in its permissibility. There is reward for any one who does this for these good intentions" (*Subul al-Huda* 1:144)

IMĀM JAMĀLUDDIN AL-KATTANI

"The day of the Prophet's ﷺ birth is extremely honoured, holy and respected. The Prophet ﷺ is salvation for whoever follows him. Whoever expresses happiness at his arrival protects himself from the punishment of Hell. Consequently expressing happiness on these occasions and spending as much as one can afford is very appropriate" (*Subul al-Huda* 1:144)

SHAYKH 'ABDUL AL-HAQQ MUḤADDITH AL-DEHLAWI

"The people of Islam have always celebrated in the month of the Prophet's ﷺ birth with gatherings. In its nights they give *sadaqa*, show happiness and in particular the Muslims remember the events that occurred at the time of the birth" (*Mā Thabata min as-Sunna* p106)

SHĀH WALIULLĀH MUḤADDITH AL-DEHLAWI

"I participated in a gathering of *mawlid* in Makkā on the day of the Prophets ﷺ. The people were sending blessings on the Prophet ﷺ and remembering the events that occurred at the time of his birth. I then saw a showering of light upon that gathering. I do not know whether I saw that light with the physical eye or the spiritual eye. When I concentrated it became apparent to me that this light was due to the angels who are ordered to attend such gatherings. I also saw the mercy of Allāh descending with the angels." (*Fuyūḍ al-Haramain* 80,81)

In another place he quotes his respected father Shāh 'Abd al-Rahim al-Dehlawī

"Every year I would prepare food on the occasion of the *mawlid* of the Prophet ﷺ. However, one year I was unable to prepare food so I only distributed roasted chick peas in happiness of the Prophets ﷺ *mawlid*. That night I saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream. He appeared very happy and before him were those chick peas" (*Al-Dār ath-Thamīn*, p40)

MAWLĀNA 'ABD AL-HAYY LAKNAWI

“Those who claim the gathering of *mawlid* to be a contemptible *bida* are acting contrary to *sharia*”

About specifying a day and date for the gathering

“There is reward for the gathering of *mawlid* whenever it is held. People in the Haramain, Basra, Syria, Yemen and other countries, on seeing the moon of *Rabi' al-Awwal*, display happiness and organise *mawlid* gatherings and read and listen to the *mawlid*. Furthermore in these countries such *mawlid* gatherings also take place outside *Rabi' al-Awwal*. Thus one should not be of the opinion that reward for the *mawlid* gathering is only in the month of *Rabi' al-Awwal*” (*Fatāwa 'Abd al-Hayy* 2:283)

НАҲИ ИМДАДУЛЛАН МУҲАҶИР МАККИ

“All the people of the Haramain celebrate the *mawlid*. This is proof enough for us. How can the remembrance of the Prophet ﷺ be condemned? However the excesses which people have devised, they should not” (*Shamā'im Imdādiyya* 87,88)

НАҲИ ШАҲИВ АЛСО РЕВЕАЛС HIS OWN PRACTICE

“The practice of (this) *faqīr* (pauper) is that he not only participates in the gathering of *mawlid* but seeing it as a source of barakah himself organises a gathering each year and finds pleasure and joy in it” (*Faisla Haft Masala*, p9)

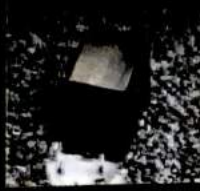
МУҲТИ МАЗНАКУЛЛАН МУҶАДИДИ

“The reciting of the *mawlid*, as long as it is based on sound narrations, and the procession on the blessed 12th, as long as it has no prohibited acts, are both permissible. To call them impermissible requires proof from *sharia*. What proof do the critics have against it? To simply state it is impermissible because the companions of the Prophet ﷺ did not celebrate it or organise the procession in this way can not be proof. A permissible act

does not become impermissible just because it was not done (before)” (*Fatāwa Mazhari*, p435,436)

АЛЛАМА МУҲАММАД СИДДИҚ НАСАН ХАН ВНОРАЛИ

“What evil is there if some one who cannot perform the *dhikr* of the Prophet ﷺ each day vows that for one day each week or month he will sit and perform the *dhikr* and read the *sira*? And then he also does not leave the days of *Rabi' al-Awwal* empty and reads the narrations which are proven to be sound (*sahih*)” (*Al-Shamāma tu'l Ghabariyya min Khair al-Mawlid al-Bariyya*, p5)



THE BIRTH OF THE PROPHET ﷺ was a momentous and revolutionary event. It was foretold by the earlier Prophets and eagerly anticipated by the previous nations, so much so that each generation would bequeath the next its signs. The episode of the elephant was, in Ibn Kathīr's own words 'a prelude to the Prophet's prophethood and an announcement of his arrival.' Some people had managed to calculate the correct date and were present in Makkah on that night and sought out the newborn. Not everyone was happy though; some openly mourned the passing of prophethood from the Children of Isaac to the Children of Ismail, others like the Cursed Iblis wailed in regret whilst the palaces of Cyrus trembled and the idols in the Ka'ba fall down.

Muslims throughout history and all over the world have and continue to remember this night, its events and its significance. This book details succinctly the events of that night, briefly describes the Prophet's parents and presents the research upon their belief. It also details the tribe of the Quraysh and the events of the People of the Elephant through the *Tafsīr* of *Sūra al-Quraysh* and *Al-Fīl* so that the reader can fully appreciate the breadth and depth of the significance of the Prophet's ﷺ arrival into this world.

JUSTICE SHAYKH MUHAMMAD KARAM SHAH AL-AZHARI, may Allah have mercy upon him, was one of the leading scholars and spiritual guides of the twentieth century. He completed his advanced religious studies with scholars such as Shaykh Sayyid Na'im ud-Dīn Murādabādī and also achieved a BA from Punjab University. From 1951 he studied at postgraduate level in *Fiqh* and *Uṣūl ul-Fiqh* at Al-Azhar University, leaving a lasting impression on the scholars there whilst attaining his MPhil, and at the same time an MA from Cairo University. In March 1981 he was appointed judge of the Sharia court in Pakistan and the following year was appointed to the Supreme Court appellate bench where he served with fearless distinction. He passed away in April 1998 leaving behind many students and works, most notably his unrivalled literary Tafseer '*Dhiyā ul-Quran*' and his historic Sira collection '*Dhiyā un-Nabī*'.

The first part of the book has been compiled from *Dhiyā un-Nabī* whilst the commentary of *Sūra al-Quraysh* and *Al-Fīl* are from *Dhiyā ul-Quran* with the endnotes by the translator.

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